

# Walter Halls Primary and Early Years School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122456
<b>Local Authority</b>	Nottingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	380476
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Terry Elston

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	412
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Birch
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pete Strauss
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	Querneby Road Mapperley Nottingham NG3 5HS
<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 9537200
<b>Fax number</b>	0115 9537868
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@walterhalls.nottingham.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 27 lessons taught by all 14 teachers. They held meetings with the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the tracking of pupils' progress, curricular planning documents, examples of the ways the school promotes community cohesion, evidence of lesson observations and information from questionnaires completed by pupils, staff and 190 parents and carers.

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

- To what extent does the teaching and curricular provision promote good progress in writing and mathematics?
- How well do teachers use assessment to check on pupils' progress and show them how to improve?
- How effective are leaders at all levels in identifying and rectifying underachievement?

## Information about the school

This is a much bigger than average-sized primary school. Around half the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. The proportions of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and who are known to be eligible for free school meals are twice that of schools nationally. The school has recently gained the Activemark, Artsmark, Eco-School Award, the International School award and achieved National Healthy Schools status. The governing body manages care facilities before and after school.

**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?**

**2**

**The school’s capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school where pupils achieve well. Parents and carers rightly believe that the school cares for their children exceptionally well so that they feel safe and valued. At Key Stage 1, pupils build well on their good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and attainment is broadly average in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Their writing is not as good as their reading and mathematics because of weaknesses in spelling and punctuation. By the end of Year 6, their attainment is above average in reading and average in mathematics. Attainment is broadly average in writing but the more-able pupils do not always do as well as they should. This is because sometimes teachers talk for too long to the whole class about how they should write and give insufficient time for them to work at their own pace. Pupils’ reading skills improve so well because teachers are very good at helping them to tackle unfamiliar words and provide exciting books to read.

Pupils’ outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in the way they think deeply about issues such as the tragedy of war and develop a very strong sense of right and wrong. Members of the school council and eco-committee take their responsibilities seriously and do much to improve their school and show how to care for the environment. Pupils have an excellent awareness of how to live healthy lives and speak with authority on why they take regular exercise and choose nutritious food at lunchtime. The initiative by the school council to introduce a salad bar has proved very popular and has encouraged those who rarely touched lettuce and cucumber to include them in their diet

Teaching is good. In the vast majority of lessons, pupils are challenged to do their best and teachers ask probing questions to help them develop a deep understanding of the work. Teachers benefit from good opportunities to develop their professional skills and show a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. Relationships in class are so good that pupils always behave well and rarely have to be reminded to get on with their work.

The school has developed an interesting curriculum that, as one pupil commented, ‘makes learning great fun.’ The broad themes give pupils valuable opportunities to use their reading skills to research topics and then write up their findings. However, teachers’ expectations of pupils’ spelling and punctuation in these topics are not always as high as in English lessons and so they miss opportunities to develop their skills further. The many extra-curricular clubs are popular and help pupils to develop their talents in sporting and creative activities.

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The school is led well by a headteacher committed to raising standards. He has helped to develop excellent partnerships with local schools and businesses that play a major part in helping pupils to raise their aspirations for the future. The headteacher is supported well by other staff with management responsibilities who share his high expectations for the school. The leaders have recently introduced rigorous systems for tracking pupils' progress which identify those who are underachieving. These systems work well at Key Stage 2 but are not as well embedded lower down the school. For example, there is no clear picture of progress from the Early Years Foundation Stage to the end of Key Stage 1.

There is a high level of racial harmony throughout the school. This arises from the outstanding provision from as early as the Reception class for children to learn about how people in this country and overseas live and worship. The rigorous self-evaluation systems, regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and challenging targets for pupils explain why the school has made good improvement since the previous inspection. It has a good capacity to sustain this improvement.

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

- Raise attainment in writing to the levels reached in reading and mathematics by ensuring that teachers:
  - provide more time in lessons for pupils to write at length
  - place greater focus on spelling and punctuation
  - have higher expectations of pupils' writing in all subjects.
- Improve the way teachers use assessment to enhance pupils' attainment by more rigorous tracking of their progress from the Early Years Foundation Stage to the end of Year 2.

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

**2**

Children enter the school with skills much lower than those typical for their ages and make good progress. At Key Stage 1, regular teaching of how to build sounds into words means that pupils grow in confidence when reading unfamiliar texts. They take care with their writing and develop a good style. However, while they use adventurous words to write poems extolling the virtues of fruit, for example, weaknesses in their spelling and punctuation prevent them attaining the higher levels in their work. Pupils do well in mathematics because they learn to calculate quickly in their head and check their answers to questions.

Pupils continue to make good progress through Key Stage 2, particularly in reading and mathematics. They learn to scan books and the internet quickly to find information about the Ancient Greeks, for example, and read with good expression. They work hard at making their writing lively for the reader and make good progress when thinking of imaginative ways to begin their sentences. Sometimes, however,

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their work is careless and they forget the rules about punctuation and starting new paragraphs. Pupils do well in mathematics because they master the basic skills of calculation at an early stage and make good use of them to solve complex problems.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, particularly in reading. In lessons, they benefit from effective support by teachers and teaching assistants while enjoying good opportunities to research topics for themselves. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress and nearly all attain in line with their peers by the time they leave.

Pupils’ good personal development makes an important contribution to their academic progress. They are well prepared for the future because of their good progress, strong sense of teamwork and enthusiastic involvement in enterprises that raise funds for the school. Pupils have a thorough knowledge of different faiths and cultures and celebrate a wide range of religious festivals. They communicate enthusiastically by letter and email with pupils from schools in this country and overseas and develop a deep understanding of the lives of people from diverse backgrounds.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

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

## How effective is the provision?

In the vast majority of lessons, teachers explain new work clearly to pupils and they listen carefully and learn quickly. The pace of lessons is mostly good, but sometimes

<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

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teachers sit pupils on the carpet for too long and this limits the amount of time they are able to work independently at their own level of ability. This is particularly the case in writing lessons. The good, well-structured teaching of basic reading and number skills ensures that pupils do well in these areas and leave well prepared for their next school. Teachers make effective use of technology to make learning interesting. The teachers make detailed assessments of pupils’ progress and use these well to plan future work. They mark books conscientiously and give pupils clear targets for improvement.

The curriculum is planned well to provide interesting and challenging work for pupils of all ages and abilities. The school does much to hone pupils’ skills in reading and number by giving them challenging tasks in the topics that build well on work in literacy and numeracy lessons. The good provision for personal, social and health education teaches pupils much about how to stay safe and live healthy lives.

The outstanding provision for care, guidance and support explains why pupils feel safe and enjoy school so much. Adults know the pupils as individuals very well, and are quick to help those who need support. Parents and carers value highly the care facilities at the start and end of the day and say how much their children enjoy these well-managed sessions. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable benefit from excellent support from a wide range of professionals and flourish as a result. The systems for rewarding pupils for their good behaviour and achievement are very effective. Pupils who are new to the school or moving on to the next one benefit from excellent guidance on what to expect.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is highly respected by all members of the school community. He has created a very good sense of teamwork among staff where everyone’s contribution is valued. The leaders evaluate pupils’ performance well by rigorous checks on how their progress and attainment compare with those of similar schools. Leaders have recently adopted good systems to track the progress of pupils through the school, starting with Key Stage 2. These work well and have highlighted important areas for improvement, such as attainment in writing. These assessments have only just been put in place lower down the school and there are shortcomings in how well teachers measure the progress from the Early Years Foundation Stage to the end of Year 2.

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The governing body provides good support and challenge to the school. Its members have a clear awareness of the school’s strengths and weaknesses and have the skills and confidence to hold leaders to account. The governing body has a good involvement in establishing rigorous safeguarding systems. Training for staff is thorough and the school keeps meticulous records of any incidents. Access to the site is controlled carefully and pupils, parents and carers say how safe it makes them feel.

The good focus on equal opportunities and the strong commitment to tackling any form of discrimination explain why this is a happy school where bullying is rare and all groups of pupils make good progress. The school has a good partnership with parents and carers that adds much to its effectiveness.

The school plays a leading role in its excellent partnerships with local schools and businesses that help the staff share good practice and organise training to meet common needs. These have had a particularly good impact on provision for information and communication technology and for gifted and talented pupils.

Community cohesion is at the heart of the school. The excellent links with the local community and schools in the United Kingdom and further afield give pupils a thorough awareness of the diversity of faiths and cultures in the world. This provision is evaluated rigorously by pupils and staff to ensure that the policy is effective.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision is good and ensures that children make good progress. They develop



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their social skills particularly well and grow in confidence. They make very good progress in their language and reading skills because of the strong focus on developing speaking, listening and word-building skills. Children’s progress is recorded carefully but the systems are still being embedded. For example, they do not yet provide an accurate picture of their progress from the start of Nursery to the end of Reception or feed well enough into the tracking systems at Key Stage 1.

The comprehensive induction procedures, excellent links with parents and carers and thorough attention to children’s welfare mean that they soon settle into school routines and feel safe. The consistently good teaching and relationships ensure that children enjoy school and learn quickly. Lessons are challenging and children have good opportunities to develop their independence and choose activities for themselves. The excellent classrooms and outdoor areas are bright and stimulating and children choose confidently from the wide range of activities provided.

Children behave well and soon learn the rules and expectations that prepare them so well for the future. The provision is led and managed well. Staff have a clear understanding of how well the provision meets children’s needs and how it can be improved.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 number of parents and carers who completed the questionnaire is above average for a primary school. Their views are extremely positive. The vast majority appreciate the way their children enjoy school, feel safe and learn how to live healthy lives. They are well informed about their children’s progress and always feel welcome in school. They believe the school is very well led and that their children are making good progress. They say that the teaching and learning are good. Evidence during the inspection supports these views. A very small minority express concerns about the way the school meets the needs of pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties. Inspection evidence indicated that the provision for these pupils is good.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Walter Halls Primary and Early Years 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 190 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 412 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	129	68	59	31	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	124	65	65	34	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	89	46	94	49	6	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	87	45	96	50	7	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	107	56	80	42	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	103	54	78	41	7	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	87	45	101	53	2	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)	83	43	88	46	6	3	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	82	43	92	48	11	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	80	42	93	48	6	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	73	38	98	51	2	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	104	54	80	42	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	122	64	64	33	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.**



17 October 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Walter Halls Primary and Early Years School, Nottingham, NG3 5HS**

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed seeing you work hard in lessons and play so happily outside in your beautiful grounds. Those who were kind enough to speak with us showed how proud you are of your school. You say yours is a good school and we agree.

You behave well, listen carefully to your teachers and make good progress. You have an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy life and know all about how to stay safe. We were impressed with the way you take responsibility and do things like saving energy and keeping the school free from litter. Your teachers provide an interesting range of activities for you and you enjoy the many clubs at lunchtime and after school. You rightly say that teachers make learning fun and are good at helping you when you find things difficult. All staff at the school take excellent care of you. Those in charge of your school do a good job and work very closely with your parents and carers to help you get the best out of your time here.

Your leaders are always looking for ways to improve the school. These are the improvements we want them to make:

- to help you to do better in writing
- to check on your progress more carefully so your teachers can help those who are falling behind.

You can help your school to improve by practising your spelling and telling your teachers the kinds of things that you would enjoy writing about.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry Elston  
Lead inspector

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