

Walton on the Naze Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115300
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	379056
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Mary Summers

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	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Geldard
Headteacher	Anne Myatt
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 14 lessons which were taught by a total of ten teachers. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents associated with safeguarding procedures and self-evaluation. They examined data and information about pupils' progress and looked at samples of their work. They also scrutinised improvement plans as well as planning for lessons and the curriculum. Minutes from meetings held by the governing body and monitoring and evaluation reports written by senior leaders as well as the local authority were also examined. Inspectors took account of the views of pupils and of 22 members of staff who had completed questionnaires, as well as the content of 144 questionnaires that had been completed and returned by parents and carers.

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

- How good is boys' achievement throughout the school?
- Is pupils' progress in mathematics at Key Stage 2 rapid enough?
- How well does the school meet the needs of more-able pupils?
- How effective are school leaders in improving the quality of teaching and learning?

Information about the school

The large majority of pupils who attend this average-sized primary school come from the immediate area, although a few travel from further afield. Almost all pupils are from White British families. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average; many of these have moderate learning difficulties. The school has won a number of national awards in recent years, including Healthy Schools status and the Activemark.

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

Walton on the Naze Primary School gives its pupils a satisfactory education. Strong partnerships with parents, carers and the community, along with good levels of care and support for pupils, contribute to its warm and positive family ethos.

Pupils are known well as individuals and are nurtured carefully throughout their time at school. They grow into enthusiastic young learners who respect one another's opinions. Pupils' good behaviour has a positive impact on their learning. They enjoy coming to school, as their active participation in lessons shows. Attendance has improved significantly and is now average. Pupils have a good understanding about how to keep healthy and safe. Parents and carers value all the support that the school offers. One, echoing the views of many, wrote, 'There isn't a group of people that I would trust more with my child.'

Achievement is satisfactory in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also achieve satisfactorily. Progress in mathematics, while satisfactory, has been slower than in reading and writing, but the school has implemented a range of initiatives which are beginning to have a positive impact. Progress in both English and mathematics accelerates in Years 5 and 6 because of better teaching. In Years 1 to 4, lessons do not always challenge pupils enough, especially those who are more able. Sometimes learning is hindered by the slow pace of lessons, which results in pupils losing concentration. Although teachers' questioning is often good in Years 5 and 6 and encourages pupils to develop their thinking and understanding, it is less effective in Years 1 to 4. Opportunities are missed to involve and motivate pupils more effectively by setting them clear short-term targets.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress. They enjoy coming to school and quickly develop good relationships with adults and other children. Progress is tracked appropriately, but the information is not used well enough to plan activities that meet the pupils' individual needs and abilities closely. Adults do not challenge pupils enough to extend their learning during independent activities.

School leaders have an accurate overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses, gained through regular observations of lessons and tracking of pupils' progress. There is a satisfactory drive for improvement and the impact of this can be seen in pupils' increased progress in mathematics this year. Teaching is improving as a result

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of some useful training on 'active learning', which has helped teachers plan more practical activities for pupils during lessons. Improvement plans however, lack a clear focus on improving the achievement of specific groups of pupils and do not contain clear and measureable success criteria and milestones along the way to help leaders judge how well they are doing. The school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' progress, especially in Years 1 to 4 by:
 - using assessment information more effectively to plan activities that challenge pupils at different levels, particularly more-able pupils
 - ensuring that lessons move at a fast enough rate, so that pupils do not lose their interest and concentration
 - providing pupils with clear, short-term targets for improvement
 - improving the use of questions to explore pupils' thinking and extend their understanding.
- Improve children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that adults engage with children more effectively during independent activities to extend their learning
 - using the information gained from tracking children's progress to plan activities which challenge them at levels, appropriate to their needs and abilities.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that school improvement plans focus directly on raising pupils' achievement and contain clear and measureable success criteria, monitoring procedures and interim benchmarks by which to judge progress towards intended outcomes.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children's skills levels vary considerably when they start in the Reception Year, but are usually in line with those expected for their age. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, their attainment is average. Progress in Years 5 and 6 is good because lessons are often challenging, practical and interesting. In one mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher used her recent experience and photographs of a visit to Ghana to challenge pupils to design enclosures to accommodate different animals. Pupils were well motivated and worked well together to calculate the perimeters of different shapes. The teacher's high expectations, along with her skilled questioning, extended their learning very effectively.

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Boys are making better progress than in past years because of a curriculum review which has ensured that topics and resources motivate and interest them more successfully. Boys, as well as girls in Year 4 class, for example, showed great enthusiasm when writing a paragraph about the Roman army. They understood the teacher's clear success criteria about using dynamic openings for sentences and used their previous research as the basis for their writing.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified and supported quickly. Their progress is satisfactory and often good in the older classes, because then additional support is directed more closely.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils support and encourage each other at work and at play. They reflect maturely, for example, considering the impact of flooding in Asia, writing moving poems to express their feelings. They take on a range of different responsibilities in the school, for example, as librarians and school councillors, and regularly participate in community events, such as the Remembrance Day parade. They have a good knowledge of cultures and communities outside their own experience.

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	2
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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers, usually, make it clear to pupils at the start of lessons exactly what they will be learning and this helps the pupils to focus on the task in hand. They use

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

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interactive whiteboards to illustrate different teaching points and encourage pupils to discuss their work in pairs and small groups. In a good lesson in a Year 5 and 6 class, for example, pupils examined a range of illustrations and paragraphs to help them understand the features and structure of an explanation text. They worked very well in groups to put these in order, challenging each other to explain the reasons for their choices. Effective questioning by the teacher encouraged them to think carefully about their decisions and also helped her to check their progress and address any misconceptions.

Teaching is less consistent in Years 1 to 4; sometimes, more-able pupils find the work too easy and make limited progress. Questioning is not always effective in extending pupils' thinking and helping them to take the next steps in their learning. Occasionally, pupils spend too much time listening passively to teachers, rather than being actively engaged in learning.

The good curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. The current arrangement for teaching Year 5 and 6 pupils in mixed-age groups for mathematics is having a positive impact on their achievement. A recent review has made the curriculum more interesting and relevant to pupils, especially boys, who talk enthusiastically about their work on the Romans or their research into Australian culture. The new curriculum is helping pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and computer skills well in different subjects. Year 5 and 6 pupils, for example, wrote clear instructions about how to play a didgeridoo and how to make a boomerang. Effective partnerships with local organisations provide useful opportunities for pupils to extend their academic, creative and sporting skills. Pupils appreciate the wide variety of clubs on offer, such as Wii-fit, tri-golf, German and choir. A good range of local visits enables pupils to develop their historical and geographical knowledge of the area.

Pupils are cared for well in school. Learning mentors provide a valuable service, helping pupils to attend school regularly and maintain good behaviour. Good links with the local secondary school mean that transition arrangements are well established, so that pupils transfer confidently at the end of Year 6. The school is quick to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide appropriate emotional or academic support. Those pupils' individual learning plans are satisfactory, but, sometimes, targets for improvement provide insufficient challenge for them. There are satisfactory systems in place to encourage regular attendance and the school continues to work with parents and carers of pupils whose attendance causes concern. The breakfast club offers good levels of care to children, providing a warm, happy atmosphere, where children enjoy a good start to the school day.

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

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The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership team is giving a satisfactory steer to the school's work and there is a clear focus on securing improvement. Senior leaders implemented a number of initiatives successfully, which are contributing well to improvements in pupils' attainment in mathematics and in teaching generally. They monitor teaching effectively through observing lessons, examining lesson plans and pupils' work. However, school improvement plans lack explicit guidance to ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in evaluating the school's performance and driving improvement.

Parents and carers develop good levels of trust in the staff because of the strong partnerships that exist between them and the school. The headteacher enjoys very good support from parents and carers. Regular consultation evenings provide good opportunities for parents and carers to find out about their children's progress and these are supplemented by extremely informative annual progress reports. The reports provide very clear individual targets for pupils, but opportunities are missed to follow up on these in subsequent lessons and involve pupils more closely in their own learning and development. Good partnerships with a wide range of schools and other agencies have provided effective opportunities for pupils to engage in competitions, projects and visits to support their academic and personal development. Recent, effective support from the local authority has been very helpful in helping the school improve the way it tracks and analyses pupils' progress.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is supportive and has a reasonable understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It is presently reviewing its systems to ensure that it gains a more thorough understanding of the school's work.

Safeguarding procedures are good. There are very well-organised arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe at school. Policies and procedures are robust and reviewed regularly and management systems are clearly defined. Staff promote equality of opportunity satisfactorily. Senior staff are now able to track the progress of different groups of pupils to identify underachievement. Instances of racist behaviour are rare and procedures are in place to ensure that any which arise are tackled promptly. The school promotes community cohesion well. There is a strong feeling of community within the school and locality and links with communities overseas, for example a school in Ghana, are developing well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and	3
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driving improvement 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	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle in quickly to the Reception Year and begin to develop their confidence and independence. The atmosphere in the Early Years Foundation Stage is warm and inviting and children come into school happily each morning, ready to engage in all the activities provided for them. Relationships with parents and carers are strong and this means that they are confident they can leave their children at school, in the knowledge that they will be safe and happy. There are effective systems in place to ensure that they transfer easily from pre-school playgroups.

Children enjoy a satisfactory range of activities that are directed by adults and some that they choose for themselves. Activities led by adults are mostly effective, enabling children to develop their phonic knowledge and number awareness well. They are less successful in encouraging children to develop their creativity and imagination, as, often, they are over-directed by adults. Adults check children's progress regularly, but do not use the information well enough to ensure that activities challenge children of different abilities. Consequently, some children, especially the more-able, do not make as much progress as they should. Children like choosing activities for themselves, but their learning is hindered by the fact that adults do not interact with them sufficiently, to challenge their thinking and extend their language.

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

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Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parental questionnaires returned was higher than average. Those who responded are extremely positive about the school's work. All say that they are happy with their children's experience at school and that the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. Virtually all agree that their children are kept safe, that their children's needs are met effectively and they are kept well informed about their progress. Many parents and carers wrote that they valued particularly the way that school staff respond very quickly to any concerns raised. These positive views were endorsed by inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

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

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

The inspection team received 144 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 225 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	97	67	45	31	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	108	75	33	23	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	94	65	48	33	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	95	66	44	31	3	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	104	72	39	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	92	64	46	32	5	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	82	57	58	40	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)	82	57	55	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	90	63	51	35	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	79	55	60	42	2	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	84	58	55	38	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	109	76	33	23	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	117	81	27	19	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

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).

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

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

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

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

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



18 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Walton on the Naze Primary School, Walton on the Naze, CO14 8PT

Thank you so much for welcoming us recently to your school and giving us your opinions about the school. Your views in the questionnaire and everything else that we saw helped us to get to know your school and how well it works. You go to a satisfactory school. Here are some of the things we liked best.

- You work hard in class and behave well.
- You understand how to keep safe, healthy and fit.
- You are keen to learn about different countries and cultures.
- The adults look after you well and arrange a wide range of activities to make learning exciting.
- The school works very well with your parents to make sure you are all focused on learning.

There are a few things that could be even better. We have asked teachers to set work at the right levels, not too easy and not too hard, so you can all make faster progress. We have asked them to set you individual targets for improvement. We think that the lessons in some classes could move more quickly, so that you don't lose your concentration. We have asked the teachers to make sure they ask you questions that make you think hard. We think that the adults in the Reception class could spend more time talking with children, encouraging them to think more carefully about what they are learning. We have asked them to use the information they get from checking children's progress to plan activities that will help them improve. Finally, we have asked the headteacher and governing body to write more detailed plans to ensure that things improve more quickly. You can all play your part in helping your school become better by making sure you work hard, behave well and attend school every day unless you are ill.

Yours sincerely

Mary Summers
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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