

Walton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135020
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	381775
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2012
Lead inspector	Ronald Cohen

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Loosemore
Headteacher	Jeremy Horsley (Interim)
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2008
School address	The Grove Walton Wakefield WF2 6LD
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Introduction

Inspection team

Ronald Cohen
Susan Hall
Sally Hicks

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 16 lessons taught by 12 teachers. They observed a breakfast club session, talked to some parents, and held discussions with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked in detail at the work in pupils' books. They also checked pupils' reading across the age range. Inspectors examined a range of documentation, including the school's records relating to pupils' achievement, the monitoring of teaching and learning, evidence relating to leadership and management, self-evaluation, behavioural records and those relating to safeguarding. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They also took into account the questionnaires returned by 174 parents and carers, 100 pupils and 18 staff.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage with none who speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. The school meets the current government floor standards. The school extends its services by providing a pre-school breakfast club. The 'Wasps' after-school club meets in the library on the school site. This provision is not managed by the school's governing body, and is therefore subject to separate inspection.

At the time of the inspection the school was led by an interim headteacher, who combined this role with his substantive role as headteacher of the secondary school which is in the same pyramid of schools as Walton Primary. The deputy headteacher was on leave and a new acting deputy headteacher had recently joined the 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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is improving rapidly and strongly. The school is not good because, despite some success in Year 5 for example, a sustained pattern of above-average attainment at the end of Year 6 has not yet been achieved.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Most children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age, and leave the school at Year 6 with average levels of attainment. This represents satisfactory progress. An unwelcome trend since the last inspection, which saw results go up in Key Stage 1 but down in Key Stage 2, has been tackled, resulting in attainment rising in both key stages.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but there is some good practice in the school. In the best lessons, pupils' learning and progress are accelerating because they are encouraged to learn for themselves by doing and experimenting. In many lessons, however, pupils are too passive, activities are not sufficiently challenging for all pupils, and teachers do not always ensure pupils follow up their comments on pupils' marked work.
- Pupils mostly behave well in lessons and around the school. Their attendance and punctuality are both above average. This testifies to their enjoyment of school, and feeling safe. However, their behaviour for learning is too passive, and, as a result, their learning sometimes slows.
- The interim headteacher and his leadership team have successfully identified the areas for development and have implemented strategies to help achieve improvements. These include setting more ambitious targets and holding middle managers to account more for monitoring and evaluating pupils' work. The governing body is very supportive but is at an early stage of holding the school to account in a sufficiently robust way.

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 the proportion of teaching that is good or better by:
 - ensuring lessons proceed at a brisk pace and provide increased opportunities for pupils to work actively and independently
 - matching lesson activities more accurately to support and challenge the learning of all pupils, and particularly more-able pupils
 - making sure that marking and feedback enable pupils to understand how they can improve their work
 - ensuring teachers check that pupils are carrying out their comments for improvement.

- Improve the effectiveness of all leaders and managers, including the governing body by:
 - setting pupils more ambitious individual targets, especially for the more-able
 - developing further the skills of middle managers in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning
 - ensuring the governing body develops its understanding of the school's effectiveness and holds the school more robustly to account.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

In lessons, pupils demonstrate good manners. However, their attitudes towards learning are sometimes passive and non-engaging. They mostly respond promptly to teachers' directions but they do not always ask or answer questions unless asked directly by the teacher. This lack of thinking for themselves, and not being active participants sometimes slows their progress.

Children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with skills and abilities which are broadly average. Teachers' observations of children's learning both indoors and outdoors are leading to more highly tailored provision. Activities are now more relevant to the needs of individual children and planning increasingly reflects children's own interests. Some opportunities are missed to make the most of the outdoor provision. Programmes to encourage young readers to grasp the links between sounds and letters are structured well. By the end of Year 2, attainment in all subjects is above average. This represents good progress at Key Stage 1.

The school's good tracking data and analysis of work indicate that pupils' progress in all subjects is improving strongly, and the current Year 6 are working at least at average levels of attainment. This represents satisfactory progress from their starting points. Year 5, a cohort which was weaker at the end of Year 2, already have above expected levels of attainment, which shows that progress is being sustained in other year groups. Moreover, boys are catching up girls and the gap in their attainment is closing rapidly. By the end of Year 6, almost all pupils read with the competence expected for their age, and a growing proportion read at above-average levels.

More-able pupils make satisfactory rather than the good progress because they are not always sufficiently challenged to extend their knowledge through independent study. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in all subjects so that the gap is closing between their attainment and that of their peers. This is due to the detailed analysis of their specific needs and careful monitoring of their progress. The vast majority of parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaires said their children's progress was good. Inspectors found that, while increasing numbers of pupils are making good progress, particularly at Key Stage 1, overall progress is satisfactory.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. During the inspection, some good teaching was observed, particularly in Year 6. In the best lessons, teachers explain clearly what pupils will learn and how they will know if they have succeeded. They plan effective opportunities for pupils to learn through practical activities and promote maximum independence by allowing pupils time to discover and practise new techniques. This was particularly evident in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, in which pupils were encouraged to work out how many handshakes there would need to be at their table and in the class as a whole, in order to ensure that everyone had shaken everybody else's hand once. They were further challenged to find a pattern which could be expressed as a formula. The challenge allowed the pupils to engage independently and actively with the task. Good probing questions by the teacher continued to excite and challenge the pupils as they saw different ways to tackle the problem. At the subsequent plenary session, the buzz of excitement and interest was palpable.

However, this type of lesson is not yet the norm. Many lessons, while satisfactory, are less effective because teachers speak too much and overly-direct the learning, thus limiting the opportunities for pupils to discover things for themselves by working independently. Work is not always well matched to the abilities of individual pupils and does not offer sufficient challenge or pace to enable pupils to make the accelerated progress necessary. This is particularly true for more-able pupils.

The impact of the planned curriculum is satisfactory. There are many opportunities for pupils to apply their reading, writing or mathematical skills in discrete lessons but they are not routinely applied in different subjects across the curriculum. The provision of art and music workshops and the links with the local secondary school enabling French and 'Cool Science' programmes all make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Marking of pupils' work is regular and supportive and often reassures pupils about how well they have done. However, marking does not always show pupils what needs to be done in order to improve their work. Pupils do not always take on board any guidance provided by their teachers. Most parents and carers believe that their children are taught well. Inspectors found that teaching is satisfactory overall.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers believe overwhelmingly that their children are safe in school. A small number of parents and carers feel that behaviour in class is sometimes disruptive, and their children are not sufficiently protected in the playground from

incidents of bullying. Inspection findings show that in this inclusive school a very small number of pupils with identified behaviour difficulties occasionally display inappropriate behaviour in class but teachers quickly and effectively deal with it, so there is minimal disruption to other pupils' learning.

Pupils, both in discussions and in their questionnaires, revealed that they feel perfectly safe and happy in school. They are aware of the different types of bullying that could exist, but they maintain that it very rarely happens, and when it does, they know who to go to, and they feel that the matter is dealt with swiftly and effectively. They know the school's procedures for dealing with inappropriate behaviour and they think behaviour is generally good.

Inspectors found that behaviour in the playground at breaks and at lunchtime was good. Pupils also behave well around the school, and school documentation shows that this is generally the case over time. Attendance is above average and pupils are punctual.

Leadership and management

The school has responded well, over the last six months, to the changes in leadership. The interim headteacher has brought focused and dynamic leadership. The school's strategic plan is based on a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, and is central to its rapid and sustainable recovery. The interim headteacher is very ably supported by the acting deputy headteacher, who is successfully guiding staff towards an emphasis on learning outcomes to help improve teaching. Their efforts have halted and reversed the decrease in attainment at Key Stage 2, and have laid down a well-communicated vision for the school, based on a drive for continued improvement. This is embraced by all staff.

Senior leaders are adept at using data to improve outcomes for pupils. All teaching staff now have an improved understanding of how to assess pupils' attainment and achievement. However, middle leaders have not sufficiently developed the skills of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and its impact on pupils' achievement in lessons and over time. Target-setting is not sufficiently ambitious to secure consistently good progress for all learners, particularly the more-able pupils.

The improvements in terms of achievement in Year 5 and 6, together with the successful development of teaching practice, and better tracking and monitoring procedures, indicate that the school has the capacity for further improvement. Members of the governing body are wholly committed to supporting the school. However, their role in evaluating the impact of the school's actions to improve achievement, in order to hold senior leaders to account, has not been sufficiently rigorous.

The school has a strong focus on developing basic skills in English and mathematics, as well as pupils' confidence in using technology. However, too few opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their skills across the curriculum. A strength of the curriculum is the provision of enrichment activities, which range from music to lunchtime gardening and yoga. The pupils also work hard to support different charities. These all contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development. However, pupils rarely visit places of worship. The school promotes equality of opportunity. For example, the school has made significant inroads into narrowing the gap between boys' and girls' performance at Key Stage 2 so that boys are achieving better. The school does not tolerate any form of discrimination. Partnerships with outside agencies are strong and have a positive impact on pupils' welfare and progress. Safeguarding procedures meet government requirements. Documents relating to safe recruitment are in place and are in good order. Staff have received appropriate and updated training.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

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

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

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

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

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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



28 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Walton Primary School, Wakefield WF2 6LD

First, may I say what an enjoyable time my colleague and I had when we visited your school. Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work. We especially enjoyed watching your singing and preparing for the shows at the end of term. You obviously enjoy school a lot.

You told us you thought the school was a happy, warm place, where you feel very safe; we agree with you. Walton is a satisfactory school. We think you are making satisfactory progress in the school. We have asked your governors, headteacher and the other teachers to do some things which will help you progress even more. These are the things we have asked them to do.

- We have asked your teachers to set you work which really makes you think hard so that you achieve even better in English and mathematics.
- We also asked your teachers to plan lessons where you can be active in your learning, and ask you questions which allow you to show just how much you know about the subject you are studying.
- We have asked your teachers to check that you use their comments in your books to improve your work.
- We have asked the governing body and some of the teachers with more responsibilities to do all they can to make sure they know what is going on in your classrooms, so they know exactly how well you are doing.

You all can help by showing your teachers how prepared you are to try to work things out for yourselves, even if sometimes, you do not get everything right first time.

Best wishes for your future

Yours sincerely

Ronald Cohen
Lead inspector

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