

# Walsall Wood School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	104201
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	377030
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

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>	240
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rick Gamble
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jenny Garratt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 September 2007
<b>School address</b>	Brownhills Road Brownhills Walsall WS8 7BP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01543 452664
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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	17–18 May 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	377030



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

Additional Inspector

Robert Miller

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 19 lessons taught by nine teachers. They heard pupils read and scrutinised their work in workbooks and on displays. Groups that support disabled pupils, and those with special educational needs and those falling behind in aspects of their class work, were observed. Meetings were held with senior staff, members of the governing body, pupils, and parents and carers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, looked at a wide range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan and systems of performance management as well as assessment data to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils. Questionnaire returns from 98 parents and carers, 50 pupils and 27 staff were analysed.

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school with a grant-funded nursery. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those on school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The number of children from minority ethnic groups is below average. Three looked after children attend the school.

The school has recently been accredited with the Healthy Schools Bronze Award, Dyslexia Friendly award (level 2), International School award (level 2), Young Leader's Sports award, 360 E safety award and Advanced Level for Looked after Children practice. Since the last inspection in 2007, a new headteacher has been appointed. The school meets current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching and make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development. It is not yet outstanding as there are some average-attaining pupils who are not reaching the higher levels in writing, but have the potential. There are also a few inconsistencies in teaching related to marking and the frequency with which pupils’ understanding is checked in lessons. Furthermore, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children’s’ progress in knowledge and understanding of the world is not as fast as in other areas of learning.
- Achievement is good for all groups of pupils including those with disabilities and special educational needs, and pupils who are eligible for free school meals. From below average starting points, pupils reach broadly average levels of attainment in English and mathematics by the time they leave the school. Progress is accelerating and current Year 6 pupils are attaining at higher levels.
- Teaching is good. Staff are determined to become outstanding teachers and the school’s highly stringent performance management procedures are moving them securely towards this goal.
- Pupils’ behaviour, safety and attitudes to learning are outstanding. This is due to excellent relationships, robust systems for safeguarding and a well-thought-out curriculum promoting very high levels of engagement in learning and outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leadership and management at all levels are outstanding. Members of the governing body are highly ambitious, well-informed ‘critical friends’ who offer excellent support. Relentless commitment to improvement, and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and senior leaders, have ensured that teaching is consistently good and continuing to improve. This is leading to accelerating progress for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding by ensuring that all teachers:
  - check pupils' understanding regularly in lessons to consolidate learning
  - identify the next steps in learning when marking topic books.
- Develop the writing skills of those average-attaining pupils who, with extra targeted support, could reach higher standards.
- Provide children in the Early Years Foundation Stage with a wider range of opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world by ensuring that planning precisely identifies the skills and knowledge that children need to learn.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

The achievement of all groups of pupils is good. Parents and carers are delighted with the school. They state that the headteacher and senior leadership team do everything possible to ensure that all groups of learners make accelerated progress. This is fully supported by inspection evidence.

Outstanding relationships, underpinned by a good sense of humour, put pupils at ease. An 'I can' culture permeates learning in the school. When asked how well the national tests went in mathematics, a Year 6 pupil said, 'I did my best. I was well prepared because I knew that I could tackle any question.' Attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is in line with the national average. All pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, those eligible for free school meals, from minority ethnic backgrounds and looked after children achieve well. This is because of excellent analysis of their progress and targeted support for each pupil. This was observed in a supplementary reading session where a pupil in Year 3 used her knowledge of letter sounds to decode unfamiliar words. Skilled teaching assistants work with small groups to ensure that any gaps in learning are quickly closed. Nevertheless, there are times in lessons when pupils who are average attainers could be pushed a bit more to get higher standards, especially in writing.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the vast majority of children arrive with skills and understanding below those expected. They make good progress in all areas of learning, other than in personal, social and emotional development, where progress is outstanding, and in knowledge and understanding of the world, where progress is satisfactory. They enter Year 1 at the expected levels and well equipped to start

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formal learning.

Throughout the school, all groups of pupils make good progress in reading because they have a strong grasp of letters and sounds and they have a love of books. While attainment in reading is broadly average by the end of Year 2, an above average proportion of pupils achieve higher levels, and this trend is continuing into Year 6. Pupils eagerly talk about their favourite authors being Roald Dahl and Jacqueline Wilson. They can explain the different techniques used by them to create moods and feelings, and to captivate the reader.

Pupils achieve well in mathematics, particularly in problem solving. All groups of pupils are confident mathematicians and use their secure knowledge of the four rules of number to solve mathematical problems. While standards in writing are improving rapidly, with the proportion of pupils attaining average levels surpassing the national average, there are nevertheless missed opportunities in lessons to ensure that a greater proportion of average-attaining pupils reach higher levels. Attainment is rising rapidly and this year, pupils in Year 6 are attaining at higher levels in both English and mathematics.

### **Quality of Teaching**

Teaching is good and improving due to the headteacher's and senior leaders' rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, coaching, identification of specific targets for improvement and regular checks to ensure implementation. Pupils say that teachers help them learn effectively and parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of teaching in the school. Inspection evidence from lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work over time supports this judgement. Teachers go to great lengths to make learning exciting and plan work that enthuses pupils. For example, in Early Years Foundation Stage, the children, joined by their parents, dressed up as pirates and went on a treasure hunt. This enthusiasm for learning is a hallmark of this school. When a group of underperforming boys were reluctant to write, the teacher set up some writing opportunities for them based on Ricky Gervais's characters called the 'Flanimals'. This inspired the boys to develop their use of descriptive vocabulary. Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs are taught well because activities are tailored well to meet their needs.

Teaching in this school is characterised by high expectations, a culture of 'reach for the stars' and generally accurate matching of work to meet pupils' needs. In an outstanding literacy lesson in Year 2, for example, the teacher persistently encouraged pupils to use descriptive vocabulary to write about a story strip. The staff's consistent use of 'Writing in codes' (an in-house system used for raising standards in writing) is paying dividends as pupils are clear as to how to structure their sentences. Reading is taught well with teachers sharing their interest in books with the pupils. This makes a positive contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Learning in lessons is characterised by a hub of activity, with pupils helping one

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another to make improvements in their work, asking questions of the teacher and solving problems using higher-order thinking skills. The well-planned curriculum has a very high focus on learning about international perspectives, learning through first-hand experiences and providing excellent opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, which contributes to pupils' excellent attitudes to learning.

Teachers use assessment data well to plan the next steps of learning for all groups of pupils but on a few occasions they do not check pupils' understanding in lessons sufficiently and do not always give enough feedback in their marking in topic books. This slows down learning and prevents teaching from being outstanding. Very precise marking is undertaken in pupils' English and mathematics books and this contributes to pupils' good rates of progress. Teachers endeavour to find the teaching style that best suits pupils' learning, and this is why learning is consistently good.

### **Behaviour and Safety**

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding. Pupils are rightly proud of their school, as demonstrated by above average attendance and excellent attitudes to learning. Parents and carers say that their children cannot wait to come to school every morning and only wish that school would be open every day of the year. They also consider that the school is an extremely safe community and that they know that their children are very well looked after. The vast majority of parents and carers say that over time behaviour is exemplary, and inspectors endorse this view. Pupils are excellent ambassadors of their school and demonstrate high levels of thoughtfulness. They make every effort to ensure that others learn and thrive in an atmosphere of respect and dignity. The school council, school mayor and playground play leaders take their responsibilities very seriously, resulting in a well-ordered and safe, cohesive community.

Pupils are very knowledgeable about the different forms of bullying, particularly cyber, emotional and physical bullying. The school hosted a competition called 'Stop and think, words can hurt' and presented the Mayor of Walsall with an anti-bullying T-shirt. Pupils are adamant that there is no name-calling and there have been no racist incidents in the school. Contributory factors to pupils' excellent behaviour are the implementation of the international dimension of learning where pupils learn about different cultures and the sterling work done by the learning mentor. This is a good improvement on the last inspection. Participation in the 'Children's University' is helping raise aspirations, as is the pupils' access to an excellent range of learning opportunities outside of school hours.

### **Leadership and Management**

The headteacher leads the school with drive and determination, and the pursuit of excellence is shared by all members of staff and is at the heart of all the school's activities. This is leading to rapidly improving teaching which is accelerating progress for all groups of pupils. Leaders at all levels rigorously evaluate all aspects of

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provision and this is underpinned by well-communicated systems for improvement. Staff are clear as to which pupils need extra support in overcoming barriers to learning because very accurate use is made of data. The school is moving towards being outstanding because performance management systems are proving to be very effective, as seen in the rise in standards in mathematics and reading over three years. This is supported by high quality professional development.

All staff with responsibilities execute their duties very well. As a result of this and the school's accurate and thorough self-evaluation, the school has made significant improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher and other leaders continue to move teaching on to a much higher level by working alongside staff and encouraging them to 'go the extra mile' to improve their work. The governing body plays a very important role in school development and offers respectful, but rigorous, challenge to leaders at all levels. It is involved in all aspects of school life and ensures that the school's arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements. All this confirms the school's strong capacity for sustained improvement as everyone is ambitious to improve the school's performance still further.

The monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and senior leaders has turned satisfactory teaching into securely good and rapidly improving teaching with several examples of outstanding teaching. The curriculum offers memorable learning opportunities for the development of basic skills and excellent opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of all aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Equality of opportunity is at the heart of all of the school's work and no pupil is left behind because performance is rigorously monitored and staff understand what they have to do in order to improve.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	29	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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](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.

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.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.**



22 May 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Walsall Wood School, Walsall WS8 7BP**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school and thank you for taking the time to tell us, both in discussions and through your questionnaires, how much you enjoy learning, and how much you respect and like your teachers. We found that your school gives you a good quality of education.

These are some of the things that we liked most.

- You make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. We were particularly impressed by the way you ask for help and how well you evaluate each other's learning.
- You are exceptionally polite, well behaved and friendly, and are good ambassadors for your school.
- You take your responsibilities in respect of the school council and playground mentors very seriously and this has a positive effect on developing your early leadership skills.
- You are extremely safe in school and you get on very well with all of your friends.
- Your teachers take good care of you and they teach you well.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and governing body to do the following things to improve the school.

- Work towards getting more examples of outstanding teaching through the school by making sure teachers check your learning more regularly in lessons and show you how to improve your topic work when they mark your books.
- Plan interesting activities for children in the Reception and Nursery class so that they do better in getting to know about the world around them.
- Push those of you who are just on the cusp of getting higher levels in writing a bit more so that you can get even higher levels in your national tests.

All of you can help by always doing your very best and continuing to behave well.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely  
Bogusia Matusiak-Varley  
Lead inspector

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