

# Dr Walker's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Fyfield

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	115125
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	379012
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 July 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Norma Ball

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	130
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Joanne Balcombe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Wendy Myers
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Walker Avenue Fyfield CM5 0RG
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	5–6 July 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	379012



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Norma Ball

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited nine lessons, including one small teaching group out of class, taught by a total of eight teachers. The inspector made visits to classes to look at displays and observe individual pupils and groups at work, and to listen to pupils read. Meetings with the headteacher, teaching staff, members of the governing body and pupils, and also informal meetings with parents and carers, took place during the inspection. The inspector took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection. The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised samples of pupils' work, teachers' planning, the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress, and documentation relating to management, curriculum and safeguarding. In addition, the inspector took account of responses to questionnaires from 51 parents and carers, 10 staff and 55 pupils.

## Information about the school

Dr Walker's is a smaller-than-average primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic heritages and none speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much fewer than that found nationally. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is greater than found in most primary schools. The majority of these pupils are supported at school action; none are supported at school action plus. A small number of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school has met the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school holds Healthy School status. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is one Reception class. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes in upper Key Stage 2. There have been a number of recent staff changes and currently three of the six classes are taught by temporary teachers.

**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>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- Dr Walker's provides a good quality of education which enables all pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, to make good progress in their time in the school. The school is not outstanding because the use of assessment information has not been fully developed to provide clear targets for pupils in English and mathematics so they understand what they still need to learn and are fully involved in how well they are learning.
- Good teaching ensures pupils make good progress in lively and well-paced lessons. Lessons are interesting and teachers use their good subject knowledge and understanding of pupils' progress to plan tasks which closely match pupils' ability.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel safe and are confident in sharing any concerns they have with the adults who care for them. Attendance is improving as a result of careful monitoring but remains average.
- The curriculum provides a rich variety of learning experiences for all groups of pupils, especially in the topics that link different curriculum subjects. Extra-curricular clubs and visits extend learning well beyond the classroom.
- The headteacher provides ambitious leadership which has ensured good teaching and pupils' continued good progress despite the challenges presented by staff changes. A collegiate approach to subject leadership facilitates close monitoring of pupils' progress and subject development. It helps to develop middle leadership skills. The school's performance has been accurately evaluated and effective initiatives have been implemented to secure good achievement for all groups of pupils. Parents and carers receive good information about their children's progress.

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

- Improve the use of assessment information to set challenging targets for all pupils in mathematics as well as English in order to:
  - make clear to pupils what they need to learn next
  - involve pupils closely in their learning by recognising and working towards their targets.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is good. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are generally similar to those of children of a similar age, but lower in elements of communication, language and literacy. They settle quickly in the stimulating and well-resourced Reception class. A close focus on developing their ability to sound out letters adds to their progress in recognising and writing simple words and short sentences. Children start Year 1 with broadly average attainment. Pupils continue to make good progress through the school. Regular organised reading sessions with teachers, parents and carers, and Year 6 reading buddies, have contributed to the above average achievement in reading by the end of Year 2. Pupils make better progress in English than mathematics but this gap is closing rapidly as a result of carefully selected strategies to make mathematics more exciting and to develop pupils' skills in solving number-based problems. At the end of Year 6, attainment is the equivalent of six months ahead of the national average in both English and mathematics. Achievement in writing is good because interesting writing themes capture pupils' interest. Vocabulary is also developed well, particularly through the exploration of poetry. The school's tracking information, pupils' work and inspection evidence indicate that all groups of pupils, at whatever stage they join the school, make good progress and achieve well from their different starting points.

In lessons, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and want to do well. This is because lessons are well planned and interesting. They work with enthusiasm and especially enjoy lively class discussions and sharing their ideas with their partners. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good and sometimes better progress from their individual starting points. They receive well-planned support, both in class and in small groups out of class. Work is carefully adapted for their needs and helps to promote both their progress and confidence. Most parents and carers who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire are justifiably pleased with the progress their children make.

### Quality of teaching

Good teaching underpins the good progress that pupils make. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to generate lively discussions and also to explore

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through questioning how well pupils understand what they have learnt. Lessons are well planned and teachers use assessment information to match tasks carefully to pupils' ability and so accelerate their progress. However, assessment information is not used consistently in setting targets for pupils. As a result, pupils are not clear about what they need to learn next and a quarter of the pupils who responded to the questionnaire survey did not know how well they were doing. Targets are set in writing but the quality is variable across classes and targets are not set regularly in mathematics. In the best lessons, good pace and interesting tasks add to pupils' enjoyment and progress. In a Reception lesson on letters and sounds, for example, a range of word-based reading tasks using a rhyming game and series of word cards enabled children to identify quickly their special word and begin working together to put the words into short sentences. Learning was fun and the good pace kept children alert and interested.

Pupils listen respectfully to their teachers and to their classmates. Attentive listening and valuing the contributions of others is especially encouraged by teachers and adds to pupils' personal development. They are keen to do well and contribute fully to their lessons, especially when tasks are engaging and the lesson has good pace. One pupil summed up this attitude to schoolwork saying, 'I love school because the teachers are really nice and learning is fun.' Teaching assistants are deployed well and work effectively in class and with small teaching groups to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Work is adapted carefully and pupils are encouraged to join in class discussions confidently. In a Year 2 mathematics class, for example, the theme of the Olympics added interest and excitement to learning about money and subtraction. Work was carefully matched to the abilities of pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs. They were able to select their own range of Olympic souvenirs to buy, work out the correct change and then contribute confidently to the class discussion at the end of the lesson. Parents, carers and pupils appreciate the good quality of teaching in the school.

**Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils show kindness and respect to each other and listen attentively to their teachers. The school and playground codes are a regular focus in assemblies, and pupils understand clearly what is right and wrong and how their behaviour affects others. There is a lively learning ethos in lessons and pupils mix happily and are sociable at playtimes. The friendship bench in the playground is used sensibly, and any pupil temporarily alone finds support from others by waiting at the bench. The questionnaire returns from a small minority of parents and carers, and from pupils, indicated that behaviour was a concern. During the inspection, a number of pupils were consulted about behaviour and bullying and stated that their school was a happy place, and that incidents of name-calling and unacceptable behaviour were rare. This is supported by school records, which indicate that behaviour is typically good. A few pupils can present challenging behaviour but this is well-managed by staff and any small incidents are dealt with quickly.

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Attendance is average but improving annually as a result of the rigorous monitoring carried out by the school. The school follows up on attendance issues quickly and discourages holidays during the term which result in the loss of important learning time for pupils. Parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire survey were unanimously pleased that their children are safe at school. All pupils are taught about how to use the internet safely. They understand about being safe and careful out of school and those who travel to school by bicycle are encouraged to take special training courses to help with their awareness of road safety.

## Leadership and management

The headteacher and deputy headteacher, working in close partnership together, have managed staff changes carefully to ensure that teaching is consistently good and all pupils continue to make good progress. A team approach in middle management has helped to share leadership skills among teachers and has quickly established a united ambition among staff to improve pupils' achievement further. Self-evaluation is accurate. Clear priorities for improvement have been identified and all staff are involved by the headteacher in school development planning. The strategies in English and mathematics to ensure that pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress are closely monitored and regularly reviewed. Regular and rigorous assessment of teaching and learning has ensured the continued good progress made by all groups of pupils during their time in the school. Areas for development are quickly identified and additional training for teachers and learning support assistants is provided where this need is identified.

The school is free from discrimination and all pupils are treated fairly and equally. Pupils respect this and show kindness and concern for each other. The governing body offers good support to the school. Through a regular programme of monitoring visits, linked to priorities in the school development plan, they are extending their skills and offering improved challenge to leaders and managers. All safeguarding requirements are met and supported by clear policies and procedures. Pupils' achievement is good, they behave well and this, together with the high quality of leadership and management, means the school is well-placed for further improvement.

The curriculum is very broad and provides a wealth of learning experiences for pupils in lessons and in the good extra-curricular activities provided for them. Topics, joining different subjects of the curriculum, are used with increasingly good effect to help pupils extend their basic skills. The curriculum also makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development alongside the extension of their academic skills. Quiet prayer areas in classes and in the main corridor provide places of calm for reflection. Pupils have a good understanding and show respect for other faiths and cultures. Each class agrees their own code of conduct and pupils are encouraged to explore a wide range of social and moral issues such as making the right choices. Parents and carers are pleased with the regular information provided by the school and the strong encouragement they receive to be closely involved in their children's learning. Information about class work is provided, together with

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guidance for parents and carers on how they can help with learning at home. The daily family reading sessions before school begins in Key Stage 1 are valued by parents, well attended and help accelerate pupils' progress in reading. Termly drop-in sessions, class parent workshops and two formal consultation evenings provide parents and carers with good opportunities to discuss their children's progress. Parents' and carers' views are valued and regularly canvassed by the school.



## 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	28	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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.**



9 July 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Dr Walker's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Fyfield, Ongar, CM5 0RG**

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school. I came at a particularly exciting time when you were rehearsing your end of term production and I was fortunate in seeing part of the dress rehearsal. I enjoyed seeing how you work in lessons, talking to you and hearing some of you read. I also read the questionnaires some of you completed. Thank you for those.

You told me that you learn a lot at your school and enjoy your work because you find learning fun. Your headteacher, other staff and the governing body work well together to make your school a happy place in which to learn. You get on together and behave well. You know a lot about being safe and healthy and you are well cared for by all adults.

Dr Walker's provides you with a good quality of education. You do well in reading, writing and mathematics. I have suggested one thing which would help to make your school even better.

- To ensure that you are very well involved in your learning, know what you need to learn next and how well you are doing, I have asked your teachers to work with you to set targets in English and mathematics and check them regularly with you.

You can all help by continuing to work hard and doing your best in your lessons. It is important that you know your targets and do your very best to achieve them.

It was a great pleasure to visit Dr Walker's and I wish you every success for the future

Yours sincerely

Norma Ball  
Lead inspector

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