

Waltham St Lawrence Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	109832
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	377993
Inspection dates	12–13 July 2012
Lead inspector	Brian Netto

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	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Branwen Mellors
Headteacher	Judith Jeffries
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2007
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Brian Netto

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons or part-lessons taught by six teachers. Five of the lessons were jointly observed with a member of the school's leadership team. A scrutiny of marking of pupils' work across the school was also conducted with the headteacher, as was a 'learning walk' (short visits) to all the classes. Discussions were held with senior leaders, staff, members of the governing body, parents and carers, and different groups of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work, listened to pupils read, and looked at the school's self-evaluation and planning documents, external evaluations of the school's work, policy documents and pupils' work. He analysed 44 questionnaires from parents and carers, those from all the pupils in Key Stage 2 and 14 from staff.

Information about the school

Pupils in this smaller than average-sized primary school come from a predominantly White British background. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class. Three of the school's five classes are mixed-age groups. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has received a number of awards including Artsmark Gold.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding as a few inconsistencies in teaching and the use of assessment information at Key Stage 2 result in pupils' good rather than outstanding progress. Improvements since the previous inspection include behaviour and safety, which are now outstanding, and the establishment of strong parental partnerships.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Children in the Reception Class are given a good start and make good progress. Attainment varies from year to year in this small school. Usually, attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average in reading and mathematics. Although improving, attainment in writing lags behind that for reading.
- The quality of teaching is good, although less consistently so in Key Stage 2. Teachers build strong relationships with pupils, and effective questioning helps to deepen and develop their understanding. Work is challenging for all abilities and needs, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The marking of work and the guidance given to pupils are mostly good, although they are inconsistent. Opportunities for pupils to write at length in different subjects are too limited.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning. They contribute significantly to a safe and well-ordered environment in which all pupils are valued. These characteristics reflect strong promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leadership and management are good. Shared leadership is strong, which provides accurate self-evaluation and regular monitoring of performance, ensuring that teaching and pupils' progress continue to improve. Alongside improvements in behaviour and safety, this demonstrates the school's strong capacity to improve. The governing body provides good support and challenge, and plays a significant role in the strategic direction of the school. The

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curriculum is enriching and inspiring, and provides many opportunities to reinforce the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By June 2013, raise achievement at Key Stage 2, particularly in writing, so that pupils make good or better progress, by:
 - increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching, through sharing best practice across the school, to ensure that pupils make rapid and sustained progress
 - improving consistency in marking and in the use of assessment information and targets so that pupils are given regular and detailed guidance on what they need to do to improve, and opportunities to demonstrate this improvement
 - increasing opportunities for extended writing in different genres across the curriculum.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Cohorts of pupils are relatively small and this contributes to some variation in attainment from year to year. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is usually above average. There was a dip in performance in English and mathematics to below average in Year 6 in 2011, but this has been reversed, and progress is good throughout the school. In 2011, Year 6 pupils' attainment in reading was above average and the dip in English was mainly because of a temporary decline in writing standards. Hearing pupils read confirms the school's current assessments that attainment in reading continues to be high. Despite improvements, standards in writing continue to lag behind those in reading and mathematics. Opportunities for pupils to apply their calculation skills ensure that they make good progress in mathematics. Lesson observations, scrutiny of work, past results and the school's own tracking show that attainment at Key Stage 1, including reading, is consistently well above average.

Children's skills, knowledge and understanding when they enter Reception vary from year to year. Children currently in the Reception class started with skills similar to those expected for their age. Children make good progress so that they usually exceed the expected goals across all areas of learning at the end of Reception. The well-structured curriculum provides challenges in learning for them alongside their older peers. For example, they demonstrated outstanding application of their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) in identifying new words. They were then able to read and recognise tricky words, and develop sentences using ideas developed through talking about taking a holiday in Hawaii.

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Pupils in all year groups make good progress from their starting points. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, make better progress than similar groups nationally. Typically, pupils show immense concentration and attention in lessons, particularly when activities are relevant and meaningful. For example, pupils in Year 3 made outstanding progress in their understanding of solitude as they reflected on places and times of isolation, and considered the life story of Muhammad. When looking at poignant images from across the world, one pupil reflected that these seemed to be 'good places to think about sad things', as they were 'calm, peaceful and quiet'. Parents and carers say that the school is helping their children's communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills, and that their children are achieving well. The inspection endorses this view.

Quality of teaching

The good and often outstanding teaching is characterised by effective teacher questioning which leads to strong engagement from the pupils. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 were able to demonstrate successful application of core Olympic values during physical education, taking inspiration from Olympic athletes in trying to improve on their personal best. Year 5 pupils provided effective guidance, support and encouragement to their younger peers. Similarly, the weekly 'wake up, shake up' aerobic sessions are enjoyed by the whole school, and help to activate brains and minds. These sessions are effectively modelled by staff and older pupils. The teaching of letters and sounds is particularly strong in Reception class and Year 1. Additionally, the most effective teaching makes learning relevant and interesting, and provides opportunities for reflective, independent thinking, and promotes the pupils' personal development. Learning was good for Year 4 pupils, for example, as they developed empathy for a character being bullied through independent writing using success criteria. Their writing showed insight and understanding of the character's feelings. However, opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills for different audiences and purposes are more limited in other areas of the curriculum. Effective deployment of other adults ensures that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported and take a full part in all activities.

At Key Stage 2, teaching in a few lessons is less successful in promoting rapid and sustained progress for all pupils, particularly in English. In most lessons, marking and use of assessment information provide guidance for pupils on how well they are doing, and what they need to improve. However, this remains inconsistent across different year groups and within different subjects. Targets are used effectively to promote challenge but again this is not consistent. Pupils are not always provided with opportunities to amend their writing following comments from teachers. Pupils say that they are not always clear about how well they are doing, though, along with their parents and carers, they also say that teaching is good.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

In this small, cohesive community, pupils mix, play and learn well together. Behaviour and safety are outstanding. This stems in part from pupils' very positive attitudes and the exceptional contribution they make to their learning. They treat each other with respect and care, and as different pupils put it, 'we treat others as we would like to be treated' and 'this is a small, welcoming and homely school where being different does not matter'. All the parents and carers who responded to the survey said that behaviour is good and that the school keeps their children safe. Pupils show excellent understanding of how to keep safe, and a strong awareness of how to avoid cyber-bullying. They make full and safe use of emails through the local authority's 'FirstClass' intranet system. The school's behaviour policy has been reviewed to take account of individual needs, and has the full backing of pupils and parents and carers. Support for one class has resulted in improvements in behaviour over time, equipping the pupils with skills to help them assert themselves if ever faced with difficulties. As a small school with some mixed-age classes, arrangements for transition to the next stage of learning are given individual attention so that pupils settle quickly and securely. The breakfast club provides a secure start to the day for a small number of pupils.

Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are given considerable care and support, and the school draws on a range of specialist services to support pupils' needs. An example is the deployment of an emotional literacy support assistant who works closely with parents and carers in the 'friends for life' group, together with their children, on promoting confidence and independence. As a result of such interventions, pupils thrive within a cohesive and inclusive community. This reflects the views of parents and carers, one of whom commented, 'Waltham St Lawrence is an incredibly nurturing and caring school that responds well to the individual needs of the children.' Attendance has improved and is above average.

Leadership and management

School leaders are experienced and provide good motivation and encouragement, so that the whole staff work as a cohesive team. This has ensured that performance in teaching has improved significantly, through effective professional development linked closely to school priorities, and informs strategic plans. The school closely analysed the reasons for the dip in performance at Year 6 in 2011. This revealed some slower progress in writing. Leaders are not complacent and strengthened actions. As a result, progress is now good across the school. The school curriculum provides a vibrant experience for pupils promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. It is broad and balanced, and relevant to the needs of all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Examples include the recent focus on Picasso, which resulted in some excellent portrait paintings following visits to art galleries. The current focus on Olympic values has helped to motivate pupils to aspire to their role models in the world of sport. Planning is careful to ensure that pupils' learning builds on their previous learning, as many learn in mixed-age classrooms.

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The governing body provides a good balance of support and challenge to the school. It plays a vital role in supporting the school's strategic direction, as evidenced in the roles of individuals during the recent process of appointing a new headteacher. The appointment has been based on a clear view of priorities, and the need to promote consistently outstanding teaching. It ensures that all statutory duties, including safeguarding, are met, and that child-protection procedures are exemplary.

The school benefits from strong partnerships with parents and carers. An overwhelming majority of the parents and carers fully support the school's ambitions, as reflected in the comment made by one that 'the school enables my children to thrive both educationally and socially'. The school's focus on the individual, so that no one is left behind, demonstrates the commitment to equality of opportunity and to tackling discrimination.

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).

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.



16 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Waltham St Lawrence Primary School, Waltham St Lawrence RG10 ONU

Thank you for the welcome you gave me during my recent visit. I enjoyed talking to you about all the good things going on at Waltham St Lawrence, listening to some of you reading and telling me how much you like reading, and about the opportunities you get to read with your parents and carers at home. I was particularly impressed by your excellent behaviour, and the care and respect that you show towards each other and towards the adults in the school. I liked the fact that many of you feature in your 'sunshine book', which records all the good things that you do, and that very few have been in the 'thin ice' book for bad behaviour. I was also impressed by the energy you showed in your weekly 'wake up, shake up' session!

I would like to tell you what I found out about your school. It is a good school. You make good progress and achieve well, reaching standards in English and mathematics that are better than pupils in most other schools. Your behaviour in classrooms and around the school is outstanding, and the school helps you to develop into mature and confident young people. The school is good and improving because of the strong leadership of your headteacher and the staff. I have asked the school to do some important things so that this improvement continues by:

- helping you to learn even faster through even better teaching
- helping you to understand how well you are doing by teachers providing you with regular and detailed guidance which also informs you about how to improve your work, and giving you opportunities to show this improvement
- giving you more chances to write in different styles in all of your subjects.

All of you can help by keeping up your very positive attitudes to your work and asking your teachers if you are not sure how to improve your work.

Yours sincerely

Brian Netto
Lead inspector

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