

Walford Primary School

Walford, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 5SA

Inspection dates 8–9 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress throughout the school. They leave Year 6 with above-average standards in English and mathematics.
- The school keeps a very careful check on the progress of every pupil. Any who are in danger of falling behind get extra help.
- The quality of teaching has improved and is now at least good in every class. There is some outstanding teaching.
- Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly. They use lesson time well to focus on the needs of different groups of pupils.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school and feel very safe there. Their attitudes to learning are mostly very positive.
- Pupils are courteous, respectful and friendly. Their behaviour around the school is excellent.
- The headteacher's inspirational leadership has created excellent staff morale. Leaders are highly effective at every level.
- An unrelenting drive for improvement has led to better teaching and faster progress. Pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics have also improved.
- The governing body is supportive and knows the school well. It is rigorous in holding the staff to account for pupils' progress.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons, teachers do not always expect enough of pupils. The level of challenge is not always maintained at the highest level.
- Occasionally, pupils do not give full attention to their teacher or their learning tasks.
- Although diligent in marking pupils' work, teachers do not always point out how and where pupils can improve it. Some pupils do not take enough notice of teachers' comments or respond to their questions when their work has been marked.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 21 lessons, observing the teaching in each class on three occasions. Seven of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held discussions with a representative from the local authority, the school improvement partner, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, five members of the governing body, all of the teaching staff and groups of pupils.
- They looked at a range of documentary evidence, including the school’s self-evaluation and improvement plans, data about pupils’ progress, and documents relating to pupil premium funding, safeguarding and special educational needs.
- They scrutinised pupils’ written work in a range of subjects and listened to pupils reading.
- They had discussions with a number of parents. They also took into account the views of 41 parents recorded on Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey of parents’ views.
- Inspectors also considered the views of 11 members of staff who completed Ofsted’s staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Graham Sims, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Keith Shannon

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average, although the number of pupils on roll has increased over the last three years.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government for pupils who, in this school, are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher, Chair of the Governing Body and several teachers have been appointed since the last inspection.
- Two building projects have been completed since the last inspection, providing two new classrooms and improved office accommodation.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for primary schools, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress for pupils at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers help pupils make even faster progress by:
 - maintaining the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - providing consistently high levels of challenge when questioning pupils
 - marking pupils' work more rigorously and providing clearer feedback on what pupils need to improve
 - making sure that pupils respond to the comments made when their work is marked
 - helping pupils to give their fullest attention by giving them greater opportunity to use their initiative and exercise their independence.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school in the Reception class with skills, knowledge and abilities that are typical for their age. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are improving throughout the school for all groups of pupils.
- The school's leaders have taken decisive and highly effective action to deal with pockets of past underachievement. They hold frequent meetings to check on the progress of every pupil. Any pupil who is in danger of falling behind is given additional support to enable them to catch up. As a result, pupils are making good progress in every class.
- In 2012, standards at the end of Year 2 were well below the national average. The factors which caused these low standards have been dealt with. The pupils who were affected are rapidly making up lost ground. Good improvements in the quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 have resulted in above-average standards at the end of Year 2. These are now higher than at any time since the last inspection.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated over the last three years. They were above average in English in 2012, and have improved again this year. Standards in mathematics are now also above average. Almost all pupils in the current Year 6 have already reached the nationally expected level in English and mathematics and almost half are working above that level.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those for whom the school receives pupil premium funding all make good progress so that any gap between their performance and that of others is minimised. Teaching is organised in such a way that ensures these pupils receive the best possible help. In 2012, the few pupils in Year 6 who were supported through the pupil premium were a term ahead of other pupils in English and mathematics when they left the school.
- Although the school had implemented a programme of teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make), the results of the phonic screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2012 were well below the national average. Subsequent weekly training for staff and reorganisation of the teaching programme have led to pupils making rapid progress this year. Older pupils enjoy reading and are confident readers. Standards in reading are now above average throughout the school.
- The new teaching programme for English, a renewed emphasis on the development of writing through the teaching of all subjects and the introduction of tablet computers all contribute positively to the good development of pupils' writing skills. Achievement in writing is not outstanding because teachers are not always rigorous enough when marking pupils' work.
- In mathematics, more pupils than before are exceeding the level expected for their age, and standards are rising because the teaching is geared to the needs of groups of pupils rather than the whole class.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of the teaching is good in every class. It has improved because the school has appointed some effective new teachers and has invested time in providing helpful training for all staff. There is some outstanding teaching which is being used to improve practice throughout

the school.

- Pupils have a high regard for their teachers, whom they see as caring, helpful and skilled at helping them understand new work. Parents and carers express their confidence in the quality of the teaching.
- The regular assessment and careful tracking of pupils' progress has made all teachers much more aware of their accountability for the progress of pupils in their class and of the levels which their pupils are expected to achieve. Maintaining a relentless focus on the progress of individual pupils has been particularly beneficial in improving the progress of disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those for whom the school receives the pupil premium.
- Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly and manage their classes well. Lessons are conducted at brisk pace, fast enough to keep pupils on their toes, but with time for reflection when necessary. Increasingly, teachers are spending more time teaching groups of pupils rather than the whole class at the same time so that they can target their explanations to the needs of each group.
- Teaching assistants make important contributions to pupils' progress, sometimes teaching small groups and at others providing support for individuals. Good liaison with the class teachers gives assistants a clear understanding of what is expected of them.
- New tablet computers and large interactive television screens are used extremely well. Pupils demonstrate highly proficient information and communication technology skills.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have access to a wide range of high-quality resources and excellent outdoor facilities. A good balance of child-initiated and teacher-directed activities helps the children to become independent learners while receiving a good grounding in basic skills. Meticulously presented 'Learning Journals' chart children's progress and provide solid evidence of their good progress.
- The teaching is not yet outstanding overall because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and the level of challenge they provide are not always at the highest level. Sometimes, for example, teachers too readily accept pupils' answers without correction or further probing questions. Pupils sometimes follow the same prescribed sequence of actions without being given the opportunity to use their own initiative or explore independently.
- The teachers are diligent in marking pupils' work, but not always rigorous enough in pointing out where and how pupils might be able to improve its quality. They often ask pupils a question or redirect them to look again at what they have written, but do not check to see that pupils have responded and learnt from their mistakes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' conduct around the school is exemplary. Pupils are courteous, respectful and friendly. They demonstrate very good manners and show a genuine interest in others. Relationships among pupils and between pupils and adults are excellent, and a very happy atmosphere pervades the school. Parents, carers, pupils, staff and governors all have a very positive impression of pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. During the inspection they were unable to recall any instances of bullying, and the school's records show that bullying is, indeed, a very rare occurrence. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and a

good awareness of different forms of bullying.

- The school is effective in dealing with pupils with behavioural difficulties. In 2012, the poor behaviour of a small number of pupils adversely affected the progress of other pupils in Key Stage 1 and led to an above-average proportion of fixed-term exclusions. Through the school's support and guidance, the behaviour of these pupils has improved markedly.
- Pupils say that they really enjoy school. This is reflected in above-average attendance. Pupils particularly appreciate the additional activities and special occasions which contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. On the last day of the inspection, for example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were eagerly anticipating their first residential experience of outdoor activities and staying overnight in a tipi.
- For most of the time, pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. They listen attentively, collaborate well when working with a partner or in a small group, and get on with their work sensibly when asked to work on their own.
- Occasionally, pupils' attitudes and responses to what they are asked to do are less positive and, for this reason, behaviour and safety are judged to be good rather than outstanding. For example, pupils do not always give full attention to their teacher or to the tasks they have been asked to do. They rarely respond to the questions or comments made by teachers when marking their books.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Through her drive and determination, the headteacher has built a highly effective team which has brought substantial improvement to the school in many areas. Governors and staff describe the headteacher's leadership as inspirational. Leadership is effective at every level: senior leaders are highly effective in carrying out their responsibilities; staff are all committed to raising pupils' achievement and morale is high; the governing body is rigorous in holding the school to account.
- Parents and carers are highly positive in their views of the school and the way it is led. A number of parents sought out inspectors to tell them how pleased they are with the school. Links with the local community have improved markedly.
- The relentless drive to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement has been successful and they are improving rapidly. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved from well below average in 2012 to just above average this year. They continue to improve in Key Stage 2. Inconsistencies in pupils' progress have been ironed out, and all groups of pupils and all classes are now making good progress. Weak teaching has been eradicated, and the quality of teaching is at least good in every class.
- The management of teachers' performance is rigorous and is improving teachers' skills. Staff are held to account for the progress of pupils in their class. Staff training and opportunities for professional development have been highly effective, particularly in improving the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders have an excellent understanding of what the school is doing well, what needs to improve and how that might be achieved. Responsibilities have been delegated effectively. Improvements over the last two or three years indicate that there is excellent capacity for further improvement.

- Astute management of the school's finances has resulted in major improvements to the school's facilities and resources. Two major building projects have improved the teaching environment enormously. Parents and staff comment on the major improvements to the internal appearance of the school, which is bright, attractive, and conducive to learning.
- Pupil premium funding and resources for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are managed extremely well. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals receive additional support and funds are used to ensure they are able to participate in additional activities, such as clubs and school trips. As a result, all pupils are given every opportunity to succeed.
- The school's leaders have made significant improvements to the curriculum, which is varied and interesting and provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Literacy skills are developed well through the teaching of topics. Pupils have access to a wide range of additional activities, special events and residential visits.
- Until recently, the local authority's support has had a positive impact on the school's development. Professional development for staff, training for governors and support for school leaders have all been effective. The local authority is no longer able to provide this support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is highly effective. Governors have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They are fully involved in supporting the school and are rigorous in holding the headteacher to account for the quality of education provided. They have a thorough understanding of data about pupils' performance and know how well the school is doing in comparison with other schools. They receive regular information on the quality of teaching and the performance of individual staff, and ensure that systems are in place to improve the quality of teaching. They ensure that salary increases are merited and that all statutory duties are met, especially those relating to the safeguarding of pupils.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	116743
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	413194

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	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Deneen
Headteacher	Louise George
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2009
Telephone number	01989 562209
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