

Walmley Junior School

Walmley Ash Road, Sutton Coldfield, B76 1JB

Inspection dates 22–23 January 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils start and leave the school with attainment that is well-above average. They make outstanding progress across all subjects.
- Outstanding leadership and management have sustained high-quality teaching, learning and achievement since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team lead by example. They are excellent role models for outstanding teaching.
- Teaching throughout the school stimulates pupils' curiosity and builds in them a desire to learn as much as they can. More-able pupils respond very well and their work is consistently impressive.
- Excellent marking in all subjects makes sure that pupils build up their skills systematically in each one.
- The management of the performance of teaching and support staff is excellent. All suggestions for improvement are followed up. Teachers readily help each other to improve.
- Subjects are brought together and taught in an imaginative way that fosters a real enjoyment of learning alongside developing pupils' academic and personal skills.
- The school successfully closes gaps in learning between different groups of pupils, including those for whom it receives pupil premium funding.
- Very occasionally, some less-able pupils find work too hard because it is not broken down sufficiently for them.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. Pupils feel very safe in school and the school makes sure they know how to keep themselves safe.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 28 lessons. These included four that were observed jointly with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- Inspectors also observed play and lunchtimes, and visited the breakfast club.
- Discussions were held with pupils, governors, staff, and a representative of the local authority.
- The 80 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were also considered, as were the views parents expressed in informal discussions at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors also analysed the 23 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including information about pupils' progress and attendance, the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation document and records and policies about safeguarding.
- Inspectors also examined the work in pupils' books, sampled the daily reading sessions and listened to pupils read in lessons.

Inspection team

Doris Bell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Suha Ahmad	Additional Inspector
David King	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion for pupils for whom the school receives additional funding, known as the pupil premium, is below average. This funding is, for example, for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those from services families.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average, but very few speak English as an additional language.
- The school has its own before- and after-school club, known as the Early Birds club.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- An acting headteacher and senior leadership team have led and managed the school since September 2013. The acting headteacher was appointed headteacher during the inspection.
- The school has long supported other local schools in improving teaching and learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend to the few lessons where it does not happen consistently, the excellent practice of ensuring that the tasks given to less-able pupils are always at the right level to secure their best possible progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils' 'golden books', where samples of best work in all subjects are kept, very clearly demonstrate their outstanding progress. Their learning journals show their excellent ability to reflect on their learning and take it further by themselves.
- Pupils read exceptionally well. They work out how to read new words and readily look them up to find their meaning so that they can use them later. They have excellent comprehension skills and a wide range of vocabulary, which they use well in their writing. Grammar, punctuation and spelling skills are also well-above average.
- Pupils enjoy writing because it almost always has a clear link to something else and, therefore, a purpose. For example, they work as archaeologists or palaeontologists, recording information in history and science. They use the texts they are reading, to learn how to use connectives, or add clauses to simple sentences to make their writing more informative and engaging.
- Pupils have excellent recall of number facts. They know their tables well and use them to calculate, for example, the sides of a right-angled triangle in Year 6, or the areas of complex shapes in Year 5.
- Mathematics work is usually related to everyday life, making it real for the pupils. For example, when Year 6 pupils were learning how to calculate 'mean' and 'average', their work was linked to facts about the cost of housing.
- Outstanding artwork throughout the school shows pupils' skills off really well. Pupils also know how to use tools safely. They demonstrated this as they made picture frames and as they created artifacts in preparation for their Roman Museum.
- Pupils use their reading, writing, mathematical and communication skills well in all subjects. They realise the importance of doing so, understanding, for example, the links between 'rap' in music and 'rhythm' in poetry.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same excellent progress as other pupils. Their learning is broken down into the smaller steps they need to take to make that level of progress and they receive excellent support from well-briefed teaching assistants.
- Very occasionally, other less-able pupils find work too hard in lessons because it has not been broken down enough for them. The progress of more-able pupils is outstanding as was evident in Year 6, where many were already working comfortably at the higher Levels 5 and 6.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make the same excellent progress as that of other pupils. The school very successfully promotes equality of opportunity and fosters excellent relationships among all pupils. An example of this is the displays showing where each pupil comes from on a map of the world, which staff then use to raise all pupils' awareness of the richness and diversity of pupils' cultural backgrounds.
- The few pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium make excellent progress and their achievement was seen to be equally outstanding alongside that of others. The gap between their and other pupils' attainment is narrower than that found nationally. In 2013 they were just over a term behind in reading, less than a term behind in writing, and two terms behind in

mathematics in a school where pupils are well ahead of the attainment levels in most schools. Nationally, pupils are around two-and-a-half terms behind in all areas.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils. They plan work based on their in-depth understanding of pupils' progress and readily change the work set in response to how well pupils are doing. In lessons, a variety of activities help to build pupils' learning up step by step.
- Clear explanations and excellent examples of what pupils are expected to learn contribute greatly to their outstanding progress. The effective use of well-briefed support staff helps disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to make excellent progress, whether working individually or in whole-class sessions.
- Marking is equally outstanding across all subjects. It gives pupils very clear guidance when to do further examples to show they understand where they may have gone wrong. Pupils always respond well to marking, even seeking further help if needed.
- Learning is very often based on practical, hands-on activities that engender excitement and curiosity in the pupils. For example, the excellent use of practical equipment in a Year 5 mathematics lesson helped clarify for many pupils how to measure the area of complex shapes. However, pupils also learn equally successfully when listening to teachers' explanations and directions.
- Imaginative teaching draws subjects together. For example, the use of contrasting pieces of music to show pupils how music can evoke different emotions provided excellent stimulus for using language to do the same in poetry. As the school turns classrooms into Roman museums, learning is taking place across virtually all subjects.
- Teachers usually cater equally well for all ability groups. Very occasionally, the work given to less-able pupils is a bit too hard and they do not make as much progress as they might. For example, some less-able pupils in Year 4 had too wide a range of connectives to choose from, did not always choose the right ones and, therefore, wrote sentences that did not make sense.
- Teachers skilfully draw all pupils into lessons, for example, encouraging them to talk to a partner to clarify their thinking before answering questions, and by giving all pupils an equal chance to answer. Teachers' questioning is excellent. It extends pupils' answers, probes their thinking and deepens their knowledge and understanding. As a result, pupils always work with determination and enthusiasm.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils, staff, parents and governors all say behaviour is always excellent, and the minimal number of incidents in the school's logs bears this out. Pupils know, understand and appreciate the system of rewards and sanctions, and teaching and support staff as well as mid-day supervisors apply them consistently.
- The pupils' thirst for learning is exemplified in their above-average attendance, in how well they listen to what they are being asked to do, and how quickly they become engrossed in learning activities. They readily help each other and try to do their best at all times.

- Pupils are justifiably extremely proud of their school and of their progress. They know the school's values by heart and cannot think of anything they would want to change. Behaviour around school, and at breaks and lunchtimes, is impeccable. Pupils arrive cheerfully at school each morning looking forward to another exciting day. Breakfast and after-school clubs provide pupils with a very well-organised start and end to their day.
- The school's work to keep the pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Leaders ensure that access to school is very carefully monitored, and pupils are taught about the dangers associated with drug and alcohol abuse. Pupils learn to cycle safely and to look out for each other.
- Pupils report that bullying is very rare. They know the different forms bullying can take, including that associated with the internet and mobile phones, and what to do about it. They say any misdemeanour is dealt with quickly and effectively, and the school is a very safe place.
- Pupils accept responsibility and carry out their roles really well, whether as librarians, school councillors, or supporting children at the infant school. They eagerly take their own learning forward, for example planning an investigation to find out about water resistance and the differences between solids, liquids and gases.
- Pupils use their learning journals exceptionally well to reflect on their weekly learning in different subjects. The imaginative approach to encouraging pupils to use these journals to take their learning forward themselves considerably increases their progress.
- There is a high degree of mutual trust and respect between pupils, staff, governors and parents. Pupils' understanding of the wider, including global, community of which they are a part, has improved hugely since the previous inspection.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about exercise and its importance in keeping healthy. Participation in sporting activities is high, and includes pupils of all abilities. Pupils can be seen using the outdoor gym equipment in the morning, at breaks and lunchtimes, and after school. They appreciate the wider range of sporting activities now available to them, and are proud of their recent successes in, for example, cross-country events and matches with other schools.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- All leaders and managers are highly ambitious for the pupils. The pursuit of excellence in everything the school does has sustained pupils' well-above average attainment over several years. The headteacher was very well supported by the acting senior leaders during the period of acting leadership. All kept the school focused on making sure pupils' progress did not falter.
- Teamwork among the staff is exceedingly strong. Staff readily help each other and, supported by senior leaders, subject leaders check and help to improve teaching and pupils' progress, for example, in the different subjects brought together in topic work.
- Senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning is very astute. Strengths and areas for improvement are clearly stated, and staff are given clear guidance on how to improve. Staff rise to the high expectations their leaders have of them. They reflect and assess for themselves how well their pupils are learning, and respond immediately to any advice and guidance they are given by senior leaders.
- The headteacher and senior leaders are excellent role models for outstanding teaching. They are working with staff to make sure they resolve the weaknesses that occasionally arise about

learning for less-able pupils. Through well-targeted training, they have also ensured that subject leaders know how to check teaching and learning in their subjects, and that they have time to do it.

- Programmes to help disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are very carefully planned and monitored to ensure their success. Many of these pupils catch up with their classmates after a short period of extra help. Where special educational needs greatly influence pupils' learning and well-being, the school works very closely with families and external agencies to help the pupils do as well as they can.
- Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. More than the minimum number of staff are trained in child protection, safer recruitment and first aid to ensure that there is always someone on the premises to whom staff or pupils can turn for help.
- The school provides an excellent range of learning opportunities for all pupils. Links between subjects are very strong, and evident in most lessons. The school is well ahead in implementing the new National Curriculum and ensuring pupils make progress in skills in all subjects. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their move to secondary education.
- Pupils' progress is tracked meticulously, and pupils understand how what they learn in one subject helps them in another. Visits, visitors and activities beyond the normal school day widen pupils' experiences and bring learning alive for them.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles any form of discrimination exceptionally well. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about different faiths and cultures at home and abroad.
- The school knows itself very well. Its self-evaluation is succinct and well founded. The improvement plan derives from it, and translates into targets for staff and pupils. The local authority uses the school as a valuable asset in school-to-school support. It has not needed to provide any additional support for it. The previous headteacher was a local leader in education, and the local authority has every confidence that the new headteacher has the competence to carry on his work – and he is eager to contribute.
- Sports funding is used wisely. It is being used to promote healthy lifestyles, purchase specialist teaching to enhance the skills of staff and pupils, widen the range of extra-curricular sport and increase the school's participation in competitive sport.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors help the school to reach its goals. They check that priorities are being met, ensure financial controls are in place, and pay close attention to what they call 'minutiae', to ensure that there is no slippage in the school's work. They use their excellent knowledge of how to interpret data about pupils' progress and attainment extremely well to challenge the school and support improvement. Pupils' progress is at the heart of everything the governing body does.
 - Governors review the headteacher's performance and check that the management of the performance of all staff is helping them to improve. They make sure all decisions about pay are based on staff performance. Through training and by visiting lessons and meeting with staff and pupils, they keep a keen eye on teaching and its impact on learning.

- They are fully involved in making decisions about how to spend pupil premium and primary schools sports funding. They check how well pupils eligible for the pupil premium are benefiting from the funding, and have ensured that plans are in place to evaluate the impact of the sports funding later this year. They hold the school to account very robustly for every detail of its work.

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	103543
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	440442

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	359
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Sheridan
Headteacher	Stuart Pearson
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2011
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