

Walton on the Naze Primary School

Standley Road, Walton on the Naze, Essex CO14 8PT

Inspection dates

3–4 February 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

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| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Outstanding |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders provide effective leadership. They are continuously driving improvement in the quality of teaching and addressing weaknesses. As a result, teaching is now nearly always good and sometimes outstanding.
- Pupils in all key stages make at least good progress, particularly in English. Where the quality of teaching is good, teachers guide pupils to choose tasks that provide a good level of challenge and this means pupils achieve well.
- Teachers understand what different pupils should be achieving and provide support when it is needed. This is having a positive impact, especially for the most disadvantaged and those who have additional needs.
- Pupils enjoy learning about a range of subjects. Their topic books show that they use their numeracy and literacy skills regularly across different subjects.
- Governors are effective because they use a range of processes to ensure they know how well the school is doing. They challenge leaders to make sure that the school continues to improve.
- Pupils' behaviour is good; they are polite, and focus well in lessons and listen attentively. There are good relationships between adults and pupils.
- The school places a high priority on pupils' welfare. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that staff will deal with their concerns. Nearly all the parents who responded to Parent View agree their children are safe and happy.
- As a result of the school's sharp focus, attendance has improved and is now above average.
- Excellent provision in the early years ensures that children's learning gets off to a rapid start. They are well prepared for Year 1.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' achievement in mathematics, while improving, is not consistently good. Work set is not always at the right level in order to deepen pupils' mathematical understanding. Some gaps in pupils' knowledge remain.
- Not all teachers have the same high expectations. Pupils do not always present their work neatly or spell mathematical and scientific words correctly.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to plan and carry out their own investigations in science.
- The school's website does not provide good-quality information for parents or a wider audience.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching even further to accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that all staff are fully confident in teaching the new mathematics curriculum
 - setting work at the right level to deepen pupils' understanding, close gaps in their knowledge and help them master mathematics
 - raising expectations of pupils' presentation and improving the correction of pupils' spelling of specialist vocabulary in mathematics and science
 - giving pupils opportunities in science to plan and carry out their own investigations and record their results.
- Ensure that the school's website meets statutory requirements and provides parents with good-quality information.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Ably led by the headteacher, school leaders have had a significant impact on raising expectations and improving teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. Pupils are now making good progress between Years 1 and 6, particularly in reading and writing. Provision in the early years has strengthened and is now outstanding. Behaviour and attendance have also improved.
- School leaders are fully aware of what needs to be done to improve the school further. The school improvement plan identifies all of the elements needed to bring about improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. New appointments to the leadership team are having a positive impact. Professional development, mentoring and support have been used well to improve weaker teaching.
- The leadership of English is effective. Pupils exhibit an enthusiasm for reading and achieve well. Pupils show a keenness to write and they apply the skills and knowledge from their grammar and punctuation lessons well. This is resulting in some good-quality writing.
- The leadership of mathematics in recent years has not been strong enough to address a decline in standards at the end of Key Stage 2. Leaders have responded by introducing changes to how mathematics is taught. Improvements have been made and senior leaders, including governors, are now closely monitoring the impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Effective school leadership, as well as an effective working partnership with a local network of schools and the local college have provided the school with a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Plans for further improvement are, as a result, well focused. This work, along with support from external consultants, have been used effectively to bring about swift improvements in the quality of teaching.
- The curriculum is well planned. Pupils' topic books show that they are taught a broad, engaging and enjoyable curriculum. Pupils talked enthusiastically about their learning in history and the trips they have enjoyed. They are knowledgeable about different religions. They say they really enjoy science lessons and that they would like more of them.
- Through lessons and assemblies, the school encourages reflection on faith, culture and personal choices. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of British values. They are considerate of gender and equality issues, and show respect for people from all backgrounds. This is helping to prepare them to participate fully in life in modern Britain.
- Pupils are given regular opportunities to learn about the world of work. They are taught to respect the law, and their understanding is reflected in the way they acknowledge, accept and conform to school rules. School councillors, nominated by their classmates, choose which charities the school supports. This helps pupils to understand the principles of democracy. Positions of head boy and head girl are achieved through application and interview.
- Almost all parents responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, say that their children are happy and safe while in school. Most would recommend the school to others. A small minority of parents indicated that they would like better quality information from the school. Although the school communicates with parents in a variety of ways, including coffee mornings, workshops and through social media, the school's website requires improvement. It does not provide parents with good-quality information and some statutory reporting requirements are not met.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding to provide additional teaching and welfare support for disadvantaged pupils, some of whom have emotional and behavioural needs. The school has given high priority to working with these pupils and their families, so pupils can gain the most from their schooling. This support, along with additional teaching these pupils receive, have been effective in increasing the progress they make.
- The primary school physical education and sports funding has been used effectively to provide professional development for teachers and to improve their skills to deliver good-quality physical education lessons. The appointment of a sports coach has brought a high level of expertise, as well as enabling a range of additional extra-curricular activities to be provided. Pupils now have better opportunities to participate in a wider range of sports and to represent the school in competitive games. These improvements resulted in a successful season last year for the football and netball teams.

■ The governance of the school

- Since the school's previous inspection, governors have given a sharper focus to holding the senior leaders to account. They regularly support and challenge senior leaders, as well as each other, in lively debate.
 - Governors receive regular reports from the headteacher about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. They monitor the work of the school through regular checks and visits.
 - Governors are familiar with the school's assessment system, which is used to track pupils' achievement. They talk knowledgeably about how well different groups of pupils are performing across the school, and where improvements need to be made.
 - Governors are aware that, in the past, disadvantaged pupils have not always achieved as well as their peers. They have ensured that effective strategies have been implemented to address this.
 - Governors make regular checks on levels of attendance and are pleased that these have improved.
 - Governors understand that the progress pupils make is an important element of successful teaching, and have ensured that this is considered when decisions are being made about teachers' pay. They have also been robust in using appropriate processes where teaching has not been good.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school works closely with external agencies, and the school's pastoral staff help to ensure that pupils are well supported and safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the previous inspection. It is now good. Teachers place a strong emphasis on pupils learning the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils develop their basic literacy and numeracy skills at a good rate. The quality of teaching in the early years is a model of excellence.
- Improvements to the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) in the early years and Key Stage 1 have resulted in pupils making better progress in reading.
- Some older pupils who have not benefited from good teaching in the past are still catching up, particularly in mathematics. The high-quality teaching at the top of the school is now accelerating the progress that these pupils are making.
- Teachers' management of behaviour is effective in engaging pupils of all abilities. Pupils are asked to reflect on their confidence about the subject matter at the start of a lesson and to compare how they feel by the end. This helps pupils to develop an awareness of themselves as learners and helps them to take responsibility for letting the teacher know when they are unsure about their learning.
- Teachers skilfully guide pupils to choose an appropriate level of challenge when they work independently. As a result, pupils show a keenness to challenge themselves and they use each other well to support learning. They cooperate well when working in pairs or groups.
- Teachers ensure that resources are used to good effect. Younger pupils explained how they use the dictionaries and word lists on their tables to help them spell correctly. Pupils often use information technology competently to read from a range of sources during guided reading sessions.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge in most areas of the curriculum. In mathematics, some teachers are still grappling with the new curriculum and filling in gaps where pupils have missed out due to previously weaker teaching. Occasionally this results in some pupils doing work that is too hard for them. Pupils sometimes do not get the chance to deepen their mathematical understanding to help them master the subject.
- The school uses assessment information well to track pupils' achievement and identify those who are making slow progress. Teachers use this information to plan lessons and design different levels of challenge. This approach is highly effective in accelerating the progress of the most-able pupils.
- Presentation of work is generally good because teachers have high expectations. Pupils' handwriting is neat, and work is set out clearly in most classes. Pupils often amend their work according to teachers' comments, which results in improvements.
- Teachers' correction of spelling is inconsistent across classes. Words that are frequently used are usually corrected but pupils often misspell specialist words in mathematics or science. Although such vocabulary is often displayed on walls in classrooms to help them, pupils still sometimes guess these spellings and so do not develop their skills in this area well enough.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are keen to recommend their school to others because they say it is fun, they learn 'lots' and their teachers are 'really nice'. They say that they feel secure and that there is little or no bullying at the school. They are confident that the adults in school will listen to them if they are worried and say that adults make time for them. The school's system of appointing 'playground pals' helps to ensure that all pupils feel included and well supported if they run into difficulties.
- Pupils say that they have done lots of work in lessons on bullying and are knowledgeable about different forms of bullying, including that related to gender or race. They know what to do if bullying occurs. They showed a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe on the internet when talking to an inspector during a guided tour of the computer area.
- Pupils show a respect for people's differences. Some pupils and staff bring a richness of cultural diversity to the school and this is recognised and appreciated by the pupils. Discussion with pupils showed that they have a good understanding of the importance of living in harmony with people of different races and religions. This helps to prepare them well to be good citizens in modern Britain.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Leaders have been very effective in changing the culture of the school. Expectations have been raised and good behaviour is the norm. Pupils have a clear view that learning is what they come to school to do. The impact of this is evident from observing pupils in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils are well mannered and courteous; they are confident to engage in conversation. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. They have positive attitudes to learning, are attentive and listen well to adults and to their peers, showing respect for the views of others. When they move around the school, they do so in an orderly fashion, responding quickly to instructions where necessary.
- A small minority of pupils have difficulty in adjusting to the high expectations from staff and can present challenging behaviour. The expertise of support staff in managing incidents unobtrusively ensures that the school is an orderly place for staff and pupils. In rare cases, exclusions are used for the very few pupils who find the higher expectations of school a challenge.
- As a result of the school's sharp focus on tackling pupil absence, attendance has improved and is now above the national average. The number of pupils who are regularly absent from school has reduced.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Since the previous inspection, outcomes have improved across all key stages. The legacy of underachievement is now being resolved in those year groups which have had disrupted teaching in the past. Children make rapid gains in their learning in the early years. Between Year 1 and Year 6, all groups of pupils now make good progress from their previous starting points in reading and writing. Their achievement in mathematics is not as strong but it is improving at a good rate.
- As a result of improved teaching, pupils' achievement in phonics at the end of Year 1 has continued to improve. An above-average proportion of pupils now reach the expected standard. Pupils are now better prepared with the necessary skills to become confident readers. Pupils say that they particularly enjoy reading and talk confidently about their choice of books. The school library provides an attractive place to enjoy a range of different reading matter.
- In 2015, at the end Key Stage 1, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly in line with the national average. Higher expectations of what pupils can achieve in Key Stage 1 are resulting in generally higher levels of attainment. Pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- At the end of Year 6, in 2015, the standards achieved were below the national average. Although most pupils reached the nationally expected level in reading and writing, fewer did so in mathematics. However, when considering pupils' starting points, most pupils made at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. For some pupils, rates of progress were good, especially in reading.

- In 2015, only a very small minority of pupils in Year 6 reached the higher levels of attainment in writing and mathematics. More reached this level in reading, but the proportion was still below the national average. Improved teaching and planning, to better meet the needs of the most-able pupils across the school, are resulting in better achievement. Pupils are now provided with more challenging work and expectations of what the most-able pupils can achieve are higher. As a result, these pupils are now generally making good progress.
- School assessment information and inspection evidence show that progress across Key Stage 2 has improved and is now good, particularly in reading. In Year 6, for example, high-quality teaching is resulting in rapid progress. Pupils who have previously lost ground are now catching up quickly. Progress in mathematics is also improving across the key stage. Pupils' current achievement in mathematics lags behind that in reading and writing. Some pupils still have gaps in their mathematical knowledge and understanding because they have not had consistently good teaching in the past.
- Pupils' knowledge of different subjects is comprehensive for their age and stage. This is supported by the work in their topic books. Pupils say that they really enjoy science; however, opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out their own investigations are limiting their opportunity to develop as young scientists.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils has improved. In Year 6 in 2015, disadvantaged pupils did not do as well as their peers. In reading and mathematics, for example, they were about a year behind other pupils in school. However, school information and inspection evidence show that the school now tracks the progress of disadvantaged pupils much more rigorously. A good range of extra support, such as additional teaching and focused group work, is resulting in disadvantaged pupils making accelerated progress. They are quickly making up lost ground and previous gaps in attainment are narrowing as a result.
- Previously, pupils with special educational needs or disability have not always achieved well. A new coordinator has been appointed to take responsibility for this group of pupils. A series of specific support programmes, well-planned teaching and effective support from skilled teaching assistants are all having a positive impact on these pupils and accelerating their progress. Inspection evidence shows that this group of pupils are now well motivated to learn and work well. As a result, these pupils are now making good progress.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Children get off to a flying start in the Reception class and they make exceptional progress during the year. Children are at different stages of readiness for starting school. Many of them have skills below those typical for their age, particularly in communication and language and personal and social development. Some children enter school with specific learning needs. The percentage of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage has increased steadily, and is now above the national average. This is because of high-quality teaching which ensures that children are well prepared for the next stage of their education when they move into Year 1.
- Welfare and safety are given a high priority in the early years. Record-keeping is rigorous and staff are highly skilled and very responsive to children's individual needs. There are good links with external agencies and, where necessary, specialists who support individual children. This means that all children develop positive attitudes to learning and participate fully in school life.
- High expectations are established from the day that children start at the school. As a result, children quickly settle into daily routines, within an extremely safe and secure learning environment. Behaviour is outstanding. Children enjoy excellent relationships with adults as well as each other. They show a high degree of confidence and enjoyment as they learn, happily chatting as they play and interact with adults. They develop new knowledge and skills quickly through the wide range of activities that are planned for them, and extend their vocabulary through interaction with each other and the adults who teach them.
- Regular assessments of what children can do, and what they want to learn, help staff to plan learning that meets children's needs and stimulates their interests. For example, a child's interest in ice cream recently prompted a transformation in the role-play area as it became an ice-cream parlour where children made paper ice creams, drew graphs, and made charts with price labels and notices for the ice creams and their various toppings.

- The outside area is a stimulating and creative place which is used effectively to support children's learning. During this inspection, children were seen enjoying the challenge of making fish move down a gutter, and working out a solution to various associated challenges. They used magnets to sort objects. These activities were well supported by adults who, for example, provide scientific words for the children to use. Adults also encourage children to develop their early writing skills through their activities both outside and in the classrooms. For example, children are expected to take responsibility for signing themselves in and out as they move from one area to another. In their books, many children are now writing simple sentences, using their rapidly developing phonics knowledge to spell words.
- The emphasis on developing the children's mathematical skills is a real strength. A group of children, guided by an adult, searched for hidden numbers in the sand, and then placed them in the correct order. Others independently played snakes and ladders, confidently counting and reading numbers up to 100. Children excitedly told an inspector about the 'maths monkey' who steals numbers in the night and the children have to find them and place them in the correct order the next day. 'No one has ever seen the maths monkey,' one child excitedly told me!
- Adults provide excellent role models for spoken English. They prompt and question effectively, and encourage children to respond in full sentences. This highly effective practice is evident in the classrooms and in the outside area. Excellent use is made of signposts and labels to effectively direct children's learning and provide challenge in the activities provided.
- The highly effective leadership of the early years has brought about a clear and highly successful focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning for these young children over time. Arrangements for the children as they move into the Reception classes ensure their smooth transition from home to school. Parents are offered various opportunities to engage with their children's learning, including contributions to the 'Wow' wall and the children's learning journeys.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 115300 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 10001924 |

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 241 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Dr Jonathan Geldard |
| Headteacher | Suzie Bliss |
| Telephone number | 01255 675657 |
| Website | www.waltonprimaryschool.co.uk |
| Email address | admin@walton.essex.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 17–18 October 2013 |

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average. This funding provides additional support for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disability is average.
- There have been a high number of new appointments, and changes to subject leadership responsibilities, since the previous inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes, some jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors observed small groups of pupils being taught.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work with subject leaders. They heard pupils read and spoke to pupils about their enjoyment of school and their opinions of behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff, governors and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including: the school's self-evaluation; the school development plan; behaviour and attendance records; governing body documents; and documents relating to the monitoring of teachers' performance.
- The views of the 50 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. Discussions were also held with parents at the beginning and end of the school day.

Inspection team

Karen Heath, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lynda Beale

Ofsted Inspector

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