

Waltham St Lawrence Primary School

School Road, West End, Waltham St Lawrence, Reading, Berkshire RG10 0NU

Inspection dates

31 January–2 February 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher is uncompromising in her aim to secure the very best possible outcomes for all pupils. Leaders and governors ensure that the right changes are made to teaching and learning so that the school continues to improve.
- Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are welcomed into this nurturing school that is 'here for everybody.' They receive close support and achieve very well.
- Teaching is highly effective. Staff know each pupil very well, providing pupils with activities that match their needs closely. As a result, pupils make substantial and rapid progress across the curriculum.
- Disadvantaged pupils of all abilities receive valuable extra support that addresses their needs precisely. Consequently, they make progress that is similar to or better than that of their classmates.
- The wide-ranging curriculum inspires pupils to enjoy their learning. Interesting topics feed pupils' thirst for knowledge. Lessons in Mandarin and French further extend pupils' skills.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They adapt their behaviour to suit a range of situations and meet adults' high expectations very well.
- Reading is a particular strength of the school. Pupils of all abilities develop a love of reading and talk with great enthusiasm about what they read.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted extremely well through all aspects of school life. Learning about the school's values such as 'love' and 'truth' helps pupils to become caring friends.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least good progress from their starting points.
- High levels of care, attention and personal development prevail in the early years. Children make rapid progress across the areas of learning so that most are well prepared for Year 1.
- Strong partnerships with parents are initiated in the Reception class. Staff take time to get to know families and help them to support their child's learning at home.
- The assessment system is relatively new. Some teachers have not yet had the opportunity to use this information to evaluate the impact of their work and accelerate pupils' progress even further, including for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further accelerate pupils' progress, particularly for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by ensuring that teachers make full use of assessment information to evaluate and refine their teaching.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher is dedicated and uncompromising in her aim to ensure that pupils achieve the very best possible outcomes. She has created a school that is 'here for everybody' and welcomes pupils with a range of abilities and needs. Staff share the headteacher's belief that all pupils can succeed and therefore support ongoing strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Consequently, boys and girls of all abilities make excellent progress from their different starting points.
- The headteacher values her staff and commits to 'growing people' so that pupils' wide-ranging needs are met very well. Along with the senior teacher, she provides staff with very effective feedback on their work that sharpens their practice. This includes posing difficult questions to staff so that they can consider the impact of their work on the pupils who need the most help. As a result, teaching is highly effective.
- Middle leaders support the headteacher very well. They have made incisive changes to teaching and learning that have raised pupils' achievement. For example, the English leader has made important changes to the curriculum so pupils can write for a range of reasons and at length. This has accelerated pupils' progress in writing across the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least good progress from their varied and sometimes low starting points. The inclusion leader ensures that these pupils receive high-quality support from well-trained staff that precisely matches their learning needs. Staff check regularly that this support is effective and make adjustments as necessary.
- Senior leaders ensure that the pupil premium funding is spent wisely. They have identified precisely the barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils face, using their detailed knowledge of individuals. Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, benefit from additional teaching whenever they need it to make similar or better progress than their classmates.
- The school's values ensure that the personal development of pupils is threaded through all aspects of school life. Staff seize opportunities to show pupils how to care for one another and build pupils' confidence. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about a range of cultures, such as the people of the Amazon basin. Pupils raise funds for charity by celebrating Christmas jumper day. As a result of initiatives such as these, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.
- Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. Last year, the local Member of Parliament, Theresa May, visited the school to further pupils' learning about the rule of law and democracy. The school's values, such as 'love', support pupils to develop tolerance and respect for others. Through religious education topics such as 'symbols', pupils also learn about a range of different faiths.
- The wide-ranging curriculum reflects the school motto 'Together we inspire and achieve.' Topics such as 'the Shang Dynasty' and 'food around the world' bring a broad range of subjects to life and feed pupils' thirst for knowledge. They also enable pupils to practise their skills in Mandarin and French. Extra-curricular activities such as

reading, running and chess further extend pupils' skills. Consequently, boys and girls make substantial progress across a range of subjects.

- The sports premium is used extremely well to further pupils' physical education. Leaders have used this to increase staff expertise and to raise pupils' participation in extra-curricular sports. Pupils also benefit from additional opportunities to compete with other schools in sports such as netball and in dance festivals through the local school sports network.
- Leaders introduced a new assessment system last year. This year, they have made some further changes to the way that they check the progress of different groups of pupils. These changes have not been fully implemented. Furthermore, leaders rightly recognise that the assessment system does not always show clearly enough the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This means that staff are not able to make full use of assessment information to review and refine their teaching, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The local authority provides effective support to the school. For example, they have worked with the headteacher to check that her judgements of the school's effectiveness are accurate. As a result, leaders have taken the right actions to enhance the school further.
- Parents value and appreciate this small school greatly. In particular, they appreciate the way that staff are 'warm, welcoming and approachable'. One parent said, 'The school has just the right amount of children so that everyone is a friend.'

Governance of the school

- Governors have extensive knowledge of the school and the pupils. They use this to very good effect. The headteacher provides detailed reports about the school's performance. Governors use this knowledge to hold leaders to account and secure excellent outcomes for pupils. This includes a strong focus on monitoring the impact of spending on disadvantaged pupils.
- The governing board has the necessary skills to ensure that essential requirements are met. They use the knowledge that they get from training extremely well to make incisive changes to policies and procedures. For example, governors have recently strengthened the complaints policy in line with the latest guidance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher ensures that there is a culture of safeguarding that takes into account current issues and risks posed to pupils. Staff receive regular training updates and are confident that they know what to do if they are concerned about a pupil.
- Leaders take the right actions to keep pupils safe. They work closely with other agencies where necessary to challenge and support families to assure themselves that pupils are safe.
- In this small school, staff take the time to get to know individual pupils and build

strong relationships with their families. They keep a close eye on pupils and provide them with the right support should a need arise. The school's emotional literacy support assistants provide very effective early help to some pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers use assessment of pupils' learning in lessons extremely well to advance pupils' attainment across the curriculum. During lessons, teachers check pupils' learning and provide them with extra challenge or support as necessary. For example, in a Years 3 and 4 art lesson, the teacher checked that pupils were using the right shapes to design a house in the style of the architect Le Corbusier. She prompted pupils effectively to think about the shapes that they had seen in the video clip.
- The most able pupils make substantial progress. Teachers ensure that activities are challenging for pupils and involve them in making their own decisions about how to deepen their learning. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 described how they like to choose from one of three starting points in mathematics. One pupil, finding common factors, said, 'I chose the toughest challenge because it teaches me multiplication facts beyond 12 times 12.'
- Teachers ask pupils incisive questions that address their misconceptions and prompt pupils to think for themselves. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, some pupils were trying to solve a time problem. By comparing times, they were considering which athlete had won a race. The teacher challenged them to think about the answer that they were expecting by suggesting that the biggest number was surely the winner. Pupils selected correctly the fastest time.
- Pupils develop a love of reading. Teachers ensure that pupils acquire essential phonics knowledge and develop a very secure understanding of what they read. They also share books with pupils that inspire them to read. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic readers. One pupil said, 'I can't stop reading. I even read at night when my parents think I am going to sleep!'
- Teachers provide pupils with plenty of opportunities to write for a range of reasons and develop their writing skills across the curriculum. For example, a Year 6 pupil wrote about the need to respect disabled children: 'These children should not be treated in any way that is different to the way that children without their particular needs are treated. In fact, they should have even more love and care applied to them.' Consequently, current pupils are making similarly high rates of progress in writing as they are in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching assistants are highly effective. They are skilled and have a very good understanding of the subjects that they teach. Teachers and teaching assistants work together effectively to provide teaching that addresses the range of needs in each class. As a result, time is used very well and pupils of all abilities make sustained progress.
- Staff enable parents to become essential partners in pupils' learning. Teachers have an 'open door' so that parents can talk about their child's progress as they need to. Parents receive information about how well their child is achieving compared to others nationally at parents' evenings and in written reports. Teachers set homework that is

appropriate for pupils' different ages and stages of learning. Most parents appreciate this greatly.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school's values help pupils to develop strong social skills. Values such as 'encouragement' enable them to support each other and flourish. In lessons, pupils show that they work well collaboratively and discuss and debate ideas in a very considered manner.
- Pupils of all ages relish the many opportunities that allow them to take responsibility. Older pupils use their well-developed social skills to act as peer mediators to solve friendship problems on the playground. Children in the Reception class love to be 'king' or 'queen' for the day and take the register to the school office.
- Bullying is very rare. Pupils know about bullying and can talk about what to do if they have a problem. They are confident that staff can deal with any issues effectively.
- Pupils say that it is a very kind and friendly school. They know what racism is but also rightly recognise that discrimination of all kinds is extremely rare. One pupil said, 'We are friends with everyone.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Around the school, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They demonstrate excellent manners, holding doors open and saying 'please' and 'thank you' at breakfast club. Pupils enjoy receiving recognition in the 'sunshine' book that celebrates those who demonstrate the school's values.
- Pupils have a keenly developed understanding of how to behave at different times. For example, in a singing assembly, staff and pupils had lots of fun and laughter singing and dancing together. At the end of the assembly, pupils settled down and returned to class in a calm manner.
- Staff provide close and very effective support to a few pupils who sometimes have challenging behaviour. This helps them to make the right choices and succeed. As a result, incidents of poor behaviour are extremely rare.
- Pupils' attendance is similar to the national average. Leaders and staff work closely with families to support pupils who have high rates of absence. As a result, their attendance is improving.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Throughout the school, boys and girls make sustained and substantial progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because teachers use assessment very well to provide pupils with activities in these subjects that closely match their learning

needs.

- In a range of subjects, most pupils at least reach the expectations for their age. This is because the broad curriculum is taught very well so that pupils acquire important knowledge and skills.
- Reading is a particular strength of the school. The very large majority of pupils reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check. At the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment and progress in reading are well above the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils make progress that is similar to or better than that of their classmates. They benefit from carefully planned additional support that is tailored to their individual needs.
- The most able pupils make sustained progress across the curriculum. Lessons are challenging for them. In 2016, the proportion of pupils reaching standards above those expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics was similar to the national averages at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Records of pupils' learning show that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least good progress from their different starting points. Some pupils catch up so that they reach the expectations for their age because the extra support that they receive is highly effective.
- Between 2013 and 2015, pupils' attainment in all subjects was consistently above that of other pupils nationally at the end of the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Current pupils are achieving as well in writing as they are in other subjects. This is because the English leader has made astute changes to the curriculum to accelerate pupils' progress. Last year, Year 6 pupils did not make as much progress in writing as they did in other subjects.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The early years leader is passionate about securing rapid gains in learning for all of the children in her care. She works very well with a team of support staff to gather and share valuable information about each child in the Reception class. All of the staff contribute their own area of expertise that supports boys' and girls' development very successfully. High levels of care, attention and personal development prevail.
- Children join the Reception Year with a wide range of skills and abilities, though some are below those typical for their age. During the year, most children make rapid progress across the areas of learning so that they are well prepared for Year 1. Around a third exceeded the expectations for their age last year. This is because staff know, challenge and support individual children very well.
- Teaching in the early years is based on a deep knowledge of individual children's needs. Staff carefully assess children's learning and use this to identify precisely what they need to learn next. For example, the early years teacher provides each child with a 'morning challenge', such as completing simple subtractions or representing the digits zero to nine with blocks. Children relish these tasks, persevere and enjoy celebrating their successes.
- Both inside and outside, staff provide children with a wide range of stimulating

activities to support their development across the areas of learning. Children enjoy activities such as making jelly, building a mud 'trap' for robbers and capturing a 'wicked witch'. At the same time, staff are on hand to talk to children, build their knowledge and support their language development, as well as to keep them safe.

- Strong relationships with parents are initiated in the Reception class. Staff visit children at home and get to know families before they start school. Parents are invited into school often to special workshops about the curriculum or to stay, play and learn with their child.
- Staff set high expectations for children's behaviour as they introduce the school's values straight away. Children are encouraged to 'say a nice thing to a friend' about their work and offer their own forms of praise such as 'super-duper storm trooper!' Children's ideas and individual personalities are much valued. Consequently, their personal development is promoted very well.

School details

Unique reference number	109832
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	10024710

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	The governing board
Chair	Richard Pelly
Headteacher	Li-Juan Ellerton
Telephone number	01189 343 248
Website	www.wslprimary.org
Email address	office@wslprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	12–13 July 2012

Information about this school

- Waltham St Lawrence is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British. Approximately one in 10 pupils is from a White Romany or Gypsy background. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is just below the national average.
- Around a fifth of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is just above the national average.
- During the school year, a few pupils with wide-ranging needs and abilities join the school from other schools.
- The school meets the government's floor standards (the minimum standards for pupils'

achievement at the end of key stage 2).

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes, spoke to pupils and looked at their work. The majority of observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, a group of pupils, four governors and two representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to seven parents and took into account 27 responses, including written comments, to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also considered 18 responses to the school's own staff questionnaire.
- A range of documents were looked at, including the school's information about pupils' achievement and records concerning pupils' attendance, behaviour, safeguarding and safety.

Inspection team

Caroline Dulon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Rosemary Addison, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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