

Walton Oak School

Ambleside Avenue, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT12 3LN

Inspection dates

15–16 November 2017

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| 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 | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leadership is effective. Leaders have tackled well a historical fall in pupils' outcomes. Current pupils are making good progress in a range of subjects.
- Governance is strong. The governing body knows what the school does well and what could be even better. They monitor leaders' actions well and hold them to account effectively.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve particularly well. Good support and leaders' high aspirations for this group ensure that they consistently make strong progress from their starting points. Additional funding for these pupils is used effectively.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and those whose are vulnerable are supported to a high standard. Their emotional well-being needs are cared for particularly well by the school's support team.
- The early years setting is good. Children make rapid progress from their typically lower starting points and are ready to achieve well when they start Year 1.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to structure learning well and help pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils develop into successful learners because provision for their personal development and welfare is good. A range of effective strategies enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to ensure that pupils are ready for life in modern Britain.
- Safeguarding throughout the school is effective. Pupils learn skills that keep them safe, including when learning and playing online.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They enjoy learning, listen attentively in class and work cooperatively with their peers. They model the school's values to a high standard.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Additional specialist teaching, particularly in music and physical education, is a strength of the school.
- A wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities enrich pupils' learning. Pupils value these opportunities highly and participate eagerly.
- Some pupils, including the most able, are not yet achieving well enough in writing. Leaders are aware of this but more needs to be done to improve pupils' outcomes in this subject.
- Occasionally, some learning activities do not meet the needs of learners closely enough. When this happens, pupils' progress slows.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement by:
 - developing further the teaching of writing
 - ensuring that most-able writers are challenged well to achieve the highest standards
 - ensuring that lessons are suitably pitched for all ability groups.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, with strong support from the deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers, leads the school well. Leaders monitor the school's effectiveness with care and use a range of information to plan successfully for ongoing school improvement. They have the highest aspirations for all and strive tirelessly to improve pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have ensured that the school's values, known as 'The Walton Oak Way', help pupils become effective learners and model citizens. British values are woven closely through this work that encompasses, for example, a range of assemblies and additional learning opportunities. As a result, pupils are tolerant and respectful of one another's differences and are supported well to be ready for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders provide staff with useful appraisal and performance management. For instance, the induction of new teachers incorporates mentoring from more experienced staff that helps develop key teaching skills. Staff demonstrate a clear commitment to improving their practice and leaders are adept at providing good-quality professional development.
- Leaders show determination to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve successfully. They evaluate carefully individual pupils' needs and use the pupil premium grant well to provide extra help to improve outcomes. Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress in a range of subjects because of the highly appropriate tailored support they receive.
- Leadership for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is very effective. Learning for this group of pupils is meticulously planned and incorporates the views of parents, teachers and other professionals from within the school and beyond. The special educational needs coordinator ensures that these pupils receive the right support so that they can make good progress from their starting points.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Capable curriculum leaders use their skills and knowledge to plan learning that engages pupils and sparks their interest. Leaders enrich learning keenly and successfully, for instance by providing a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and educational visits.
- Additional sports funding is used particularly well by leaders to inspire pupils to participate in physical activities. Pupils show great enthusiasm when taking part in tournaments and relish competing on behalf of Walton Oak. Leaders' commitment to providing a wealth of enjoyable sporting activities ensures that pupils develop positive attitudes to physical activity.
- Leaders' work in developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is strong. Pupils are respectful and tolerant and demonstrate a keenness to be supportive and kind to each other. The firm emphasis leaders place on promoting the school's values, alongside the rich opportunities to learn about different cultures and religions, ensures that pupils develop a strong moral compass and broad positive attitudes.
- Parents are very supportive of Walton Oak. They like the positive relationships between pupils and teachers and the inclusive atmosphere that pervades the school. One comment, typical of many, was: 'This is an excellent school, with solid core values, that

educates and challenges pupils in an environment that helps them develop and excel.'

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well. They visit regularly and organise themselves efficiently to monitor the school's effectiveness. Appropriately, they review a range of evidence, including pupils' progress information and reports from their external school improvement partner, to monitor and challenge effectively leaders' work. Importantly, they know what is working well and what leaders must do to improve the school further.
- Governors oversee well the school's financial management. For instance, they know that the additional money the school receives for sports and for the pupil premium has a positive impact on improving outcomes for pupils. This close scrutiny ensures that governors fulfil appropriately their financial obligations.
- Governors have high aspirations for disadvantaged pupils. They track this group of pupils carefully and have an insightful knowledge of the challenges this group faces. Wisely, governors are sharpening their analysis further to better understand the progress made by most-able disadvantaged pupils throughout the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a strong safeguarding culture that permeates throughout the school. When recruiting new staff, all appropriate background checks are made. This information is logged accurately on the school's single central record. The school's safeguarding practices meet statutory government guidelines.
- Leaders provide appropriate training to ensure that staff know how to identify children at risk and what actions to take to keep them safe. For instance, recently, staff have completed training that included how to recognise potential signs of child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. Timely updates ensure that staff know of any changes or developments in child protection matters. As a result, staff are suitably knowledgeable in protecting children from harm.
- The school works effectively with child protection officers from the local authority. Importantly, if this external service is not good enough, leaders will demand better care and support for children. Leaders always act in the very best interests of children at risk, and challenge others to do the same.
- Pupils learn well how to keep themselves safe. For instance, they know the potential risks posed by social media and playing games online. They know to keep personal information safe and to report anything they see on the internet that makes them feel unsafe or scared.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good throughout the school. Current pupils learn well across a range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use this well to structure learning appropriately, ask pupils searching questions and provide clear and concise explanations that tackle misconceptions well. As a result, teaching helps pupils to deepen successfully their knowledge and understanding.
- The wider curriculum provides exciting opportunities for pupils to learn in a range of subjects. For instance, specialist teaching enables pupils to develop particularly strong skills in music. In one lesson, Year 4 pupils demonstrated with aplomb their ability to sing increasingly challenging vocal songs and exercises, while maintaining a steady beat.
- The teaching of mathematics provides pupils with effective challenge. For instance, in Year 6, pupils were working on worded problems that required them to complete correctly several multiplication and addition calculations to arrive at the final answer. Pupils grappled with the increasingly complex calculations and worked diligently to complete the exercise accurately. In the best examples of mathematics teaching, challenge is particularly well matched to pupils' ability, ensuring that they make rapid progress.
- The support provided by teaching assistants is of a high quality. Teaching assistants have strong subject knowledge and are trained well to support pupils to make rapid progress. Skilfully, the one-to-one support they provide is balanced appropriately with high expectations for pupils to work independently. Consequently, the pupils they support work hard and achieve well.
- Teaching is adapted well for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Insightful planning and preparations ensure that these pupils receive learning support that is appropriate to their needs and level of ability. Leaders, teachers and other adults work together to ensure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities learn well across the curriculum.
- Most-able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress in mathematics and reading. This is because teaching is sharply focused on their greater level of understanding. For example, new approaches to teaching mathematics are providing good opportunities for this group of pupils to deepen further their understanding.
- Teaching is not yet ensuring that pupils, including the most able, achieve as well as they should in writing. Where teaching is at its strongest, pupils have good opportunities to practise their writing and grammar skills, study good writing from high-quality texts and write at length in a range of genres. Leaders are aware that, despite improvements, more needs to be achieved to ensure that pupils' outcomes in writing improve.
- Occasionally, teaching is not well matched to pupils' needs. Learning is sometimes too easy and does not challenge pupils sufficiently or engage their interest. When this is the case, pupils' progress slows.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is a calm and harmonious environment because pupils are polite, respectful and friendly to each other. They take pride in their school and embody its values and the 'Walton Oak Way'.
- Vulnerable pupils receive additional high-quality care that supports their emotional well-being and boosts their confidence and self-esteem. The nurture leader, inclusion leader and home-school link worker know these pupils and their families well, and plan careful, coordinated support that ensures that this group of pupils are well placed to learn effectively.
- Pupils state confidently that they feel safe at school. They receive a well-planned programme of additional personal development learning that, for example, deepens their understanding of bullying and how to keep safe. Inspectors observed a special assembly where pupils demonstrated ably their strong understanding of what bullying is and the repercussions it has on its victims. Pupils know, for instance, that bullying sometimes take place online, but must always be reported to an adult if it happens.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Poor behaviour rarely happens at Walton Oak. Staff have high expectations of pupils and uphold the school's behaviour policy fairly and consistently. Pupils respond well to this and model good behaviour, both in class and at play.
- Pupils enjoy learning. They listen attentively to their teachers and to their peers. They enjoy sharing their thoughts and ideas together in lessons. Consequently, lessons are calm and purposeful and pupils participate keenly and with interest.
- Pupils relish the opportunity to take on additional responsibilities. Inspectors spoke to pupils who act as members of the 'sports crew' and pupils who represent their peers on the 'pupil parliament'. Pupils hold these positions in high regard and demonstrate a firm commitment to fulfilling these roles to the best of their ability.
- Pupils attend well. Leaders ensure that families know the importance of not missing too much school. For example, the recently appointed attendance officer works diligently to support and challenge pupils and parents to attend punctually and regularly. Effective strategies are in place that encourage pupils not to miss school. As a result of leaders' actions, rates of attendance have improved further.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders' successful actions have led to a significant rise in pupils' outcomes. Across the school, current pupils are achieving well in a range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children make rapid progress in the early years. Many children join the setting with low

starting points. However, effective teaching ensures that most catch up quickly. The majority of children, including those who are disadvantaged, reach a good level of development.

- Pupils achieve well in phonics. The proportion who meet the standard expected for their age in the Year 1 phonics screening check is similar to that seen nationally. From the Nursery upwards, children demonstrate a strong and growing ability to apply phonics knowledge to successfully sound out new words.
- Across the school, current pupils make strongest progress in mathematics and reading. Work in books demonstrates that pupils work hard and show determination to complete tasks carefully and accurately.
- Disadvantaged pupils, and those who speak English as an additional language, make very good progress in a range of subjects. Throughout the school, this group of pupils achieve as well as, and sometimes better than, their non-disadvantaged peers.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported very effectively. As a result, they learn well and make strong progress in a range of subjects from their starting points.
- Pupils make good progress across the wider curriculum. Their achievements in sport, music and the creative arts are particularly impressive. Highly effective teaching ensures that pupils' physical and artistic learning is of a high standard.
- Most pupils' writing across the school is good and improving. However, a few pupils are not yet achieving as well as they should for their age, and some most able pupils are not yet writing at the highest standards.

Early years provision

Good

- Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, flourish in the Nursery and Reception Year. Activities inside and outside of the classrooms provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn across the early years curriculum. Staff manage children's learning well and help them develop the necessary skills to be ready for the next stage in their schooling.
- The early years leader provides strong leadership. Under her careful direction, staff make accurate assessments of children's abilities. This information is used by staff to devise learning activities that develop children's emerging skills well. As a result, children, including those who need to catch up from lower starting points, make strong progress.
- Staff are adept at leading children's learning. When appropriate, adults participate in play and deepen children's knowledge and understanding with effective questioning. At other times, they stand back appropriately and ensure that children learn independently. This careful balance nurtures successfully children's curiosity and natural desire to learn.
- Children's emerging writing skills are developed effectively. A suitable range of activities encourage children's communication skills and provide activities to practise mark-making and writing. Staff are on hand to provide extra guidance, for example in helping children write their names and form letters. Children enjoy writing and were particularly enthralled when writing 'speech bubbles' for their cartoon superheroes.

- Staff ensure that systems to keep children safe in the early years are rigorous. For example, risk assessments are carried out carefully and accurately to ensure that the setting is a safe place to learn. Staff are trained well and know what actions to take to protect children from harm. All statutory welfare requirements are in place.
- Children learn well about being safe. For example, when using the outside play equipment, children demonstrated safe ways to climb on the apparatus. Staff support effectively children's welfare by teaching them routines and behaviours that reduce the risk of harm.
- Parents hold the early years setting in high regard. They appreciate the opportunities to visit classrooms and the good communication between home and school. As one parent stated: 'They do a good job of instilling a sense of joy in learning. Without prompt, my child said, "I love it here!".'

School details

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| Unique reference number | 134557 |
| Local authority | Surrey |
| Inspection number | 10037829 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 465 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Lawrence Bentley |
| Headteacher | Miss Mandy Watts |
| Telephone number | 01932 259 604 |
| Website | www.oak.surrey.sch.uk |
| Email address | office@oak.surrey.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | March 2013 |

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The majority of pupils are White British. Others come from a range of different ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including those who have an education, health and care plan, is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning throughout the school, spoke to pupils and looked at work in their books. Some observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, groups of pupils and seven governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke with the school's improvement partner appointed by the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the day and took into account 116 responses, including written comments, to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also analysed 45 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- A range of documents were reviewed, including the school's development plan and self-evaluation document, information about pupils' achievement, attendance, behaviour and safety, governing body reports and reports from the school's improvement partner.

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