

Waltham Holy Cross Primary School

Quendon Drive, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 1LG

Inspection dates

12–13 December 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors have not demonstrated the capacity to improve pupils' outcomes, which are too low at key stage 2. In 2016 and 2017, pupils' progress in English and mathematics was well below average.
- Governors do not effectively hold school leaders to account for the quality of education pupils receive. They do not challenge leaders well enough to raise pupils' achievement swiftly.
- Leaders' own monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not rigorous. They do not effectively hold teachers to account for the achievement of pupils.
- Leaders do not check the accuracy of the information they hold about pupils' achievement. As a result, some assessment information is overgenerous. This is particularly the case in key stage 1.
- Middle leadership is not yet effective. Middle leaders do not check the progress of pupils well enough to ensure that they are making sufficient progress, particularly in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching and learning over time in key stages 1 and 2 is inadequate. Expectations of pupils are often too low. The most able pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to excel and deepen their understanding.
- Leaders are unclear about the progress made by pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. This is because assessment information does not show the progress these pupils make from their different starting points.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years is too inconsistent. In their learning and play, children do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders do not ensure that additional funding such as the pupil premium is used effectively to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are polite and demonstrate an enthusiasm for learning. They behave well.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - holding teachers more sharply to account for pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - ensuring that the impact of the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils is thoroughly evaluated and is used far more effectively
 - ensuring that middle leaders make a demonstrable difference in their areas of responsibility to demonstrate the impact of their work on the progress pupils make
 - making sure that the monitoring of teaching leads to consistent improvements
 - providing the governing body with more detailed information about the achievement of different groups of pupils so that governors are able to hold leaders fully to account for the impact of their actions
 - using assessment information more precisely to ensure that all pupils make good progress from their varying starting points.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan activities precisely to meet the needs of pupils across the school and across subjects
 - assessing pupils' learning accurately to check and improve the progress of different groups of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and the most able.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good by ensuring that:
 - there are high expectations of what all pupils can achieve
 - learning is planned to suit the different abilities of pupils and provides opportunities for pupils, particularly the most able, to deepen their understanding
 - assessment information is used effectively to intervene and provide timely support for those who need to catch up, so that pupils make good progress.
- Improve the provision in in the early years by:
 - ensuring that leaders evaluate and analyse assessment information so that activities meet children's needs
 - providing more meaningful and purposeful activities for children so that they sustain their focus and achieve well
 - providing more opportunities to develop basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics both the inside and outside early years environment.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and governors have not focused enough upon raising pupils' achievement swiftly in reading, writing and mathematics in key stages 1 and 2, and the early years. They have not focused precisely enough on pupils' starting points so that they can be proactive in accelerating the progress of all pupils.
- Leaders have not been effective in ensuring that pupils have an acceptable standard of education. Pupils' combined attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2 was well below average in both 2016 and 2017. In addition, pupils' progress in reading and mathematics in 2016 and 2017 was also well below average.
- Leaders do not monitor pupils' outcomes well enough. In a wide range of subjects, evidence of progress is not apparent in pupils' books. Teachers are not effectively measuring the progress that pupils make in subjects such as science and history.
- Improvement plans and targets to manage the performance of staff have been ineffective in bringing about the rapid improvements needed. Teachers are not being held sufficiently accountable by leaders for the progress pupils make. Leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning has not focused well enough on the progress of the most able and those who are disadvantaged.
- Despite gathering a wealth of assessment information, procedures for checking the progress of pupils are not rigorous enough. Leaders do not check the accuracy of the information that teachers provide. This results in evaluations that are not a true reflection of pupils' performance. For example, inspectors' checking of the accuracy of key stage 1 information found that leaders were overgenerous about the progress it represented.
- Leaders have not suitably evaluated the use of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. They have not ensured that funds are having a sufficient impact on improving pupils' attainment or progress. Leaders do not analyse the information about how well disadvantaged pupils are achieving or intervene quickly enough to ensure that these pupils make accelerated progress to catch up.
- Leaders make effective use the physical education (PE) and sport premium. However, they have not measured its impact sufficiently. At the time of the inspection they had not shared this information on the school's website.
- Senior leaders, including governors, have an inaccurate view of where the school is on its journey of improvement. This is highlighted in their own evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, which is overgenerous.
- Subject leaders, new in post, are enthusiastic and keen to learn. However, due to a lack of clear guidance and systematic approaches, their checking of pupils' learning lacks rigour and precision.
- Newly qualified teachers told inspectors that they feel supported. They welcome the guidance and support offered by leaders and their colleagues.
- There have been some improvements in key stage 2. The phase leader is focusing on aspects which are beginning to raise pupils' achievement, for example in writing.

However, overall improvements have been too slow because leaders have not focused on ascertaining pupils' different starting points to ensure that they make the progress they need to catch up or to make the progress of which they are capable.

- Leaders are improving provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Training has been provided for additional adults and there are clear plans in place to strengthen procedures for identifying children's needs as soon as they enter the school.
- In her new, wider role, the special educational needs coordinator has analysed the progress of pupils across the school. However, it is unclear how effectively teachers use this information to provide precise support in lessons, so that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make the progress of which they are capable.
- The wider curriculum provides pupils with a range of learning opportunities. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is supported well through the school's curriculum.
- Pupils enjoy school and develop positive attitudes to learning. They are taught how to behave towards each other and how to respect the views of others from different backgrounds.
- The majority of parents who contacted inspectors, through Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire and by free-texts were positive about the school and the changes that leaders have made over the last year.

Governance of the school

- Governors rely too much on what school leaders tell them. They do not check the work of leaders well enough. This is particularly the case with leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Governors are unsure how the different groups of pupils achieve, particularly the most able and disadvantaged pupils. This is because the assessment information they receive is not checked against leaders' evidence of the progress that pupils make from their different starting points.
- Governors do not have a robust understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This is because the school's self-evaluation is overoptimistic and they have not sufficiently checked the information they have been receiving from senior leaders. Newer governors are keen to develop their roles and fulfil their responsibilities in providing rigorous challenge and developing a strategic direction for the school.
- Although governors have welcomed the local authority's recommendation for a review of governance, they have not ensured that this has been undertaken with sufficient urgency to rapidly improve their effectiveness. More recently, the local authority has expressed concerns about the effectiveness of governance and its capacity to improve without their additional support.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The single central record of checks made when appointing new staff to work with children is fully maintained and is up to date.

- The headteacher, who is the designated lead for safeguarding, records accurate information about pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff receive regular and up-to-date training and therefore know their duties well. Actions are followed up in a timely fashion.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school. School staff and the majority of parents agree that the school is a safe environment.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Assessment has not been accurate enough to provide meaningful information about how well pupils are doing and where they are in their learning or to plan suitable learning for pupils of different abilities.
- Too many pupils, including the disadvantaged and the most able, do not receive the necessary support to achieve as well as they can. Teachers do not match activities to pupils' learning needs in order to meet the expected standards of the national curriculum and end-of-key stage targets.
- A legacy of weak teaching and some staff changes during key stage 2 have resulted in a significant proportion of pupils needing intensive support to catch up. Leaders have not focused exactly on the needs of these pupils. Consequently, the support has not been precise or sufficient enough to accelerate pupils' progress.
- The teaching of English and mathematics is not consistently good enough across all year groups. Training for staff has focused on improving their subject knowledge of teaching writing and mathematics. Staff have also worked with subject specialists and visited outstanding or good schools to increase their effectiveness. Although there has been some improvement, this has not been quick enough and has not had a significant impact on improving pupils' progress.
- The teaching of phonics does not ensure that pupils in key stage 1 develop good knowledge and understanding to ensure that they achieve well in reading. This is because the frequency and quality of activities taught in the early years do not give enough opportunities to learn and practise phonics skills both in reading and writing. For example, inspectors found that in the early years there were very limited opportunities for children to apply what they had learned.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Leaders do not evaluate their work relating to pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare effectively. They are, therefore, unable to identify improvements accurately and confirm whether their actions are having an impact.
- Leaders do not analyse behaviour and attendance information sufficiently well. Attendance is broadly in line with average over time, but has fallen since the start of

this academic year. Nevertheless, leaders have begun to raise the profile of attendance and to recognise pupils and classes with the highest attendance. Leaders are starting to analyse this information that they have.

- Pupils feel safe. They are aware of different types of bullying and know whom to speak to if they have concerns. They are aware of potential dangers of online activity and are taught e-safety in lessons.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils move around the school building and grounds sensibly.
- Pupils play well together during breaktimes. They are happy and say that they enjoy school. They are polite, courteous and listen carefully in lessons.
- Parents comment positively about how their children enjoy school. One parent commented, 'The children are rewarded for good work and good behaviour, it certainly has had a positive effect on my daughter.'
- Pupils concentrate on their activities in class, even when they have finished their work quickly and when teaching is not demanding enough.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Too few pupils meet the expected standards at the end of key stage 2 in English and mathematics, and even fewer make sufficient progress from their different starting points.
- Scrutiny of work in pupils' books, and observations of teaching and learning across the school confirm that pupils make insufficient progress from their different starting points in English and mathematics.
- Achievement is persistently low. The progress of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics has been in the bottom 10% of schools nationally. This indicates that pupils are not receiving an acceptable standard of education.
- The school's own assessment information suggests that children in the early years and key stage 1 achieve broadly in line with or above national standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, inspection evidence does not support this. Discussions with leaders confirmed that because the standard of pupils' work is not thoroughly checked and some assessments are inaccurate, the assessment information is not secure.
- Outcomes in phonics at the end of Year 1 in 2017 fell below the national average; too few pupils achieved the expected standard in the national phonics screening check. Work scrutiny and observations of teaching and learning indicate that current pupils are not making the rates of progress they need to catch up quickly.
- Pupils' outcomes in mathematics in 2016 were low and their progress inadequate. Their achievement declined further at the end of 2017, particularly for pupils in Year 6. Scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils confirmed that pupils are not being challenged sufficiently to make the progress they need to meet the expected standards.

- The most able pupils are not making enough progress. This is because they are not provided with work that challenges them sufficiently to deepen their understanding. Expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve are too low.
- Leaders are unsure whether disadvantaged pupils' achievement is improving and cannot evidence that the gap is being diminished when compared with other pupils nationally. Similarly, the progress made by pupils with SEN and/or disabilities is not clear because leaders do not know the pupils' starting points.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching is too inconsistent. Assessment information is not analysed well enough to ensure that children who enter Nursery and Reception with skills typical for their age make the progress that they should.
- Leaders' assessments show that the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development is broadly average. However, inspectors found limited evidence to support the accuracy or validity of this information. Without reliable information, leaders are unable to ensure that children make the best possible progress.
- Leaders have not effectively monitored the quality of teaching and learning closely enough. They have an overgenerous view of the impact that teaching has on children's development.
- Children are able to choose activities which interest them. However, they quickly lose focus because adults do not do enough to stimulate children's interest and enjoyment.
- Activities are not planned to ensure that children, particularly the most able, make enough progress from their higher starting points. For example, in one phonics session observed, children sat patiently waiting for their turn to sound out three-letter words, and this slowed their progress.
- Adults do not use questioning effectively to promote learning or to develop children's wider understanding and speaking skills. Activities often lack purpose and, as a result, the progress for children over time is slow.
- Children have limited opportunities to practise forming letters and to apply their writing skills. Much of the children's work displayed and recorded on the school's electronic system shows that activities do not take into account children's starting points. Children are not fully challenged and do not make the progress that they are capable of.
- Children in the early years are happy and know the routines well.
- Leaders and teachers have developed effective partnerships with parents and carers. The new system for recording children's development allows teachers to share with parents information about their child's learning. Many parents contribute to their child's learning record, enabling teachers to gain a bigger picture of what children can do. This has had a positive impact on increasing parental engagement.
- Relationships between adults and children are very gently positive and nurturing. This ensures that children are ready to learn.
- The statutory welfare, safeguarding and safety requirements are met fully.

School details

Unique reference number	115286
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10044757

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	597
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Lisher
Headteacher	Erica Barnett
Telephone number	01992 713191
Website	www.whxps.co.uk
Email address	admin@walthamholycrossprimary.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 February 2015

Information about this school

- In 2016, the school did not meet the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 2.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the impact of pupil premium, and the PE and sport premium funding.
- Waltham Holy Cross is larger than average. It has two Nursery classes and three classes for each year group.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is average.
- The previous inspection was carried out when the school was an infant school. Since that time, it has amalgamated with the junior school and become a primary school.

- The current headteacher joined the school in January 2017.
- The school employs four newly qualified teachers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across all year groups. Several lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with staff, parents and pupils.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the governing body and three other governors, a representative from the local authority and spoke with the school's excellence commissioner.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read. They reviewed pupils' work in lessons and analysed samples of work in books, on display, in classrooms and around the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, key stage and subject leaders, the inclusion leader and the leader of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development plan and the minutes of governing body meetings. They considered a range of documentation, including the school's own assessments of pupils' progress, behaviour logs, attendance information and safeguarding documents.
- Inspectors took account of the 159 responses to Parent View and 145 free-text messages from parents. They also considered the results provided by 52 members of staff in the school's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracy Fielding	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jane Ladner	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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