

# INSPECTION REPORT

**WALMSLEY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Bolton

LEA area: Bolton

Unique reference number: 105232

Headteacher: Mrs PA Ashton M.Ed

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Boden  
12301

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> September 2000

Inspection number: 224373

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Blackburn Road Egerton Bolton
Postcode:	BL7 9SA
Telephone number:	01204 301863
Fax number:	01204 598712
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	The Revd D J Brierley BA
Date of previous inspection:	May 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mr Malcolm Weaver	Lay inspector
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a bigger than average Church of England aided primary school. It serves an area of relative affluence and the majority of pupils live in privately owned houses. It is a popular school and pupil numbers have increased steadily over the past five years to the present total of 311. There are roughly equal numbers of boys and girls. Children enter the reception class in the September following their fourth birthday. For the first two weeks they attend for mornings or afternoons only. The vast majority of pupils are of white ethnic origin. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is very low. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and the proportion with statements of special educational need are both below average. When children enter the school, their standards of attainment are generally above average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an outstanding school that gives very good value for money. The excellent relationships between all members of the school community create a family atmosphere where the pupils feel relaxed and secure. The headteacher is an excellent classroom practitioner who leads by example in teaching for 40 per cent of the week. The quality of teaching is very good overall and frequently excellent. This leads to very high standards in English, mathematics and science. There is an excellent team spirit, with all the governors and staff working very well together to raise standards even further. The headteacher and her staff know their pupils very well and have very high expectations of what each pupil can achieve. Through excellent planning and preparation of lessons the most efficient use is made of the time during the school day. Children join the school with generally above average attainment; they make very good progress and leave very well prepared for secondary school.

#### **What the school does well**

- The outstanding leadership by the headteacher and key staff, and the keen involvement of the governors in supporting and monitoring the work of the school, are the key factors in the school's success.
- The grouping of pupils in ability sets and the high quality of teaching lead to very high standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development. Pupils are academically and socially confident and are prepared well for the next stage of their education.
- The very good partnership between the parents and the school supports the pupils' learning very well.

#### **What could be improved**

- The inspection team did not find any significant areas for improvement. In order to improve further the school should continue its very good practice and implement the actions identified in the school development plan.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has improved at a much faster rate than would normally be expected. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and the very high standards of achievement have been sustained. The last report indicated that the then headteacher provided good leadership. The present headteacher and her key members of staff provide excellent leadership and management. The main improvement is the sharpening of classroom practice through excellent monitoring of teaching and learning. The emphasis is on supporting teachers and developing their expertise through staff development courses.

All the key issues for development in the last report have been tackled very successfully. What were deemed to be weaknesses are now positive strengths. The school development plan has been improved to cover longer-term proposals with appropriate costings. The targets are very specific and improvements in standards are used to measure the effectiveness of spending decisions. The enthusiasm and commitment

of the headteacher, staff and governors mean that the school is very well placed to maintain its high standards and to continue to improve.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	A*	A	A
mathematics	A*	A*	A	A
science	A*	A	A	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards have remained consistently high for the past three years. They are well above both the national average and the average achieved by pupils in schools with a similar intake. Pupils' written work is of a very high standard. They use a very good range of styles and use grammar and punctuation accurately. This has been brought about by the formalised teaching of skills and the very effective use of good quality children's literature to provide good models of writing. The pupils have very good mental arithmetic skills that they use well to solve mathematical problems. This is the result of the enthusiasm for the subject engendered by the high quality teaching. The practical nature of science lessons leads to very good scientific knowledge and understanding.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. The pupils are proud of their school and talk enthusiastically about it. They are very eager to learn and always try to do their best. They do their homework willingly because they enjoy learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils behave very well in lessons. Playtimes and lunchtimes are very pleasant social occasions when the pupils play well together.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The pupils genuinely like one another and are very supportive. They respect other people's values and beliefs. They accept responsibilities willingly and carry out their duties conscientiously.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Very good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection. All the lessons seen were at least satisfactory and 94 per cent were good or better. Half were very good or better and 17 per cent were excellent. The main strengths of the teaching are the very detailed planning, the very high expectations of what each pupil can achieve and the lively pace of lessons. Not a minute is wasted; the teachers know their pupils very well and constantly demand more from them. This keeps the pupils on their toes and they respond well to the challenges. Pupils with special educational needs are taught particularly well because of the school's policy of setting pupils according to ability. They are taught in much smaller groups; they are taught the same curriculum, but the pace is slower so that their individual needs can be addressed.



Literacy and numeracy are both taught very well. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and they use this well to frame effective questions that probe pupils' understanding and lead their thinking forward. Their enthusiasm, combined with a keen understanding of how children learn, leads them to plan interesting and relevant activities that develop the pupils' skills in a wide range of contexts. Through their very good relationships with pupils the teachers are successful in creating a secure learning environment where the pupils are prepared to 'have a go' without the fear of being wrong. There were no significant weaknesses in the lessons seen, but a relative weakness in a very small minority of lessons was that too much was planned for the time available. This meant that work was hurried and, as a result, was completed only at a superficial level.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum not only meets statutory requirements, but also caters for the needs and interests of all its pupils very well. The school places a strong emphasis on teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. However, this does not mean that pupils miss out on other areas. They enjoy a wealth of experiences across a wide range of subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent. These pupils are taught literacy and numeracy in small groups, which means that they benefit from more individual attention. The teachers plan the work very well and have high expectations. Their progress is monitored constantly and their targets are reviewed regularly. As a result they often make very good progress. In other lessons teachers match work accurately to their needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Through its close links with the church and the very good opportunities provided across the curriculum, the school nurtures the pupils' spiritual development very well. Provision for moral and social development is excellent. This is reflected in the pupils' attitudes and behaviour, both in lessons and around the school. Provision for cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. In addition to very good academic guidance the pupils are given a good range of life skills through very effective assessment procedures and realistic target setting.

#### **HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. This is the major strength of the school and the key to its success. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She is an excellent classroom practitioner who leads by example. She delegates responsibility effectively to the deputy headteacher and curriculum co-ordinators. Relationships between the headteacher and her staff are excellent. This creates an excellent team spirit where the teaching and non-teaching staff work well together to the benefit of the pupils. The monitoring of teaching and learning is excellent, with the emphasis on enabling teachers to become better at what they do.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors are very knowledgeable and their close involvement with the school means that they have a very clear picture of the school's development and where it needs to go next to improve further. They are very supportive of the school but they are not afraid to ask pertinent questions. They have a good input into the school development plan and measure the success of spending decisions in terms of improved standards. The school applies the principles of best value very successfully.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Excellent monitoring of teaching and learning is used well to build a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

	There are rigorous systems for monitoring the school's performance against other schools and there is a strong commitment by the staff and the governors to improve standards even further.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school uses finance, the staff, time, accommodation and learning resources to very good effect. This is reflected in the much smaller teaching groups than are found in most schools.

#### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Their children are taught well and achieve high standards.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard.</li> <li>• Members of staff are approachable.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school is successful in helping children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents would like more extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with the positive views expressed. The school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities. However, in response to the parents' wishes, the school has increased the range of activities offered.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**The outstanding leadership by the headteacher and key staff, and the keen involvement of the governors in supporting and monitoring the work of the school, are the key factors in the school's success.**

1. The headteacher and her deputy provide excellent leadership. They are both excellent classroom practitioners who lead by example. The headteacher has never lost sight of the fact that she is first and foremost a teacher. She is timetabled to teach for 40 per cent of the time and nothing is allowed to get in the way of this. She sees this as a way of keeping her own practice up to date and enabling her to share ideas with colleagues. The 'spin off' to this is that teachers value her ideas because she is talking from experience.
2. Despite the very high standards that the school achieves the headteacher is not complacent. She is very self critical and constantly striving to make things even better. Through caring support for the staff, and an approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning that is both sensitive and rigorous, she has boosted teachers' confidence and enabled them to sharpen their classroom practice. Parents and staff think highly of her as a manager. They value her excellent interpersonal skills that enable her to put her ideas forward so successfully. As one parent at the pre-inspection meeting put it, "She doesn't just tell you to do or not do something, she explains why."
3. A significant strength of the headteacher's management is her ability to delegate responsibility. She has formed a very effective partnership with her deputy that strengthens the overall management. She has developed the role of subject co-ordinators very substantially since the last inspection. The most significant aspect of this is that by releasing co-ordinators to audit their subjects thoroughly, through lesson observations and examination of pupils' work, she empowers them to make reasoned judgements about how their subjects can be improved. The co-ordinators follow their audits by leading staff meetings where an action plan is formulated to take their subjects forward.
4. The governors play a full and active part in running the school. They have a clear idea of its strengths and areas for development. All the issues identified for development in the last report have been tackled so successfully that they have now become significant strengths. There is an excellent relationship between the staff and the governors, but this does not prevent them from asking searching questions. The school development plan is a comprehensive working document with key priorities identified clearly and success criteria defined precisely. It also sets out detailed cost projections so that the school knows exactly how much money it has in hand.

**The grouping of pupils in ability sets and the high quality of teaching lead to very high standards in English, mathematics and science.**

5. The grouping of pupils in ability sets is very beneficial to raising standards. It enables the pupils to receive more individual attention and allows the teachers to spend their time more productively teaching whole groups which have roughly the same level of understanding. The determination by all the staff to raise standards further, together with the constant drive to ensure that individual pupils achieve their full potential, has combined to raise the quality of teaching very significantly since the last inspection. This has resulted in the maintenance of very high standards in English, mathematics and science. Half of the lessons seen were judged to be very good or excellent. There were no significant weaknesses in any of the lessons seen. The main strength of the teaching is in the very detailed planning and preparation. The teachers are so well prepared that not a moment is lost. All the lessons seen had a lively pace that kept the pupils on their toes. The teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve and challenge them accordingly. They have very good subject knowledge, particularly in literacy and numeracy, and a very good understanding of how children learn. They use this knowledge very effectively to match work accurately to pupils' individual needs. All the pupils follow the same curriculum but the school recognises that some groups need to proceed at a slower pace whereas others grasp ideas much faster. The expectation is that they will all get there in the end but for some it will take longer. Even though the pupils are grouped in ability sets, the teachers do not lose sight of the fact that individuals learn at different rates and they make good provision for this. Teachers are very successful at putting pupils at their ease and making learning fun and interesting. The pupils respond well to this. They enjoy learning and work hard both in lessons and at home. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is very good. They share assessment information very effectively with individual pupils and give clear indications of how the work may be improved.
6. Pupils' written work builds progressively in maturity and complexity as they move through the school. The benefits of teaching the basic skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation are evident in the Year 6 work. Stories are imaginative and well written with a wide range of punctuation used correctly. Conversation is used particularly well to make stories come to life. For example, in one story a girl answers the telephone....."Dad, dad, there's a man on the....oh you're there, there's a man on the phone who wants to speak to you," Nicole said. In the same story....."But, but, but I haven't got the money," stuttered Ben. Pupils use a good range of expressive language, such as...*Mr Terrapin stamped across the grass like a herd of elephants in a mad and fierce way.*
7. In mathematics pupils build up very good mental skills that they use well to solve everyday problems. Here again the attention to teaching the basic skills pays dividends. Pupils have instant recall of number facts so no time is lost while they work things out; they concentrate on the problem in hand. They have a very good understanding of mathematical terminology and use it naturally in their explanations. They enjoy finding out new ways to solve problems and can use patterns to predict answers and seek solutions.
8. The practical nature of science lessons means that pupils not only have above average scientific knowledge but, more importantly, that they understand what they have learnt. This was demonstrated clearly by a group of pupils in discussion with an inspector. He challenged them to find a way of producing drinking water from sea water using given materials. They designed a system and explained the scientific application underlying the processes using the correct scientific terminology. They all claimed science to be a favourite subject, recalling with pleasure investigations carried out in previous classes.

**The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development. Pupils are academically and socially confident and are prepared well for the next stage of their education.**

9. The warm relationships between all members of the school community are a major strength of the school. All the adults in the school provide very good role models that promote very good moral and social development. The care that all the adults show to the pupils encourages them to work hard and treat one another with respect. In discussion the pupils said that they appreciate the

teachers' sharing of assessment information with them and setting targets for improvement. They respond well to this by working hard both in lessons and at home. Their determination to succeed was illustrated by the Year 6 pupils in conversation with the registered inspector. When the success of last year's Year 6 pupils was mentioned they were very proud for the school's sake, but insisted that they were going to do even better in 2001!

10. From their earliest days in school the pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities. This was demonstrated clearly during the inspection when children in the reception class, who had only been in school for a week, were given simple tasks. Throughout the school lessons proceed at a brisk pace, because basic routines have been established, with pupils giving out and collecting in equipment almost unnoticed. Older pupils demonstrate initiative and keenness to help by fulfilling simple roles in the school office. They use their initiative well, for example, in replenishing the stocks of paper in the photocopier. Many pupils are involved at lunchtimes in helping staff to prepare resources for younger pupils. During the early part of the year the oldest pupils support the new children in the reception class very well. They are very mature in their approach to this, seeing themselves as caring adults, making sure that the younger children are enjoying their new school.
11. The pupils are also encouraged to be responsible for their own learning without the intervention of adults. For example, the music room is in constant use at lunchtimes and after school by groups of pupils who compose and perform their own music, sometimes illustrating it through dance. During the inspection several groups were observed. They were confident in explaining and performing their work.
12. By taking on responsibilities the pupils become aware of how society functions and how everybody has a valuable part to play. The school involves pupils in regular consultations and takes their views into account. This aspect could be even better if the school were to set up an elected school council so that pupils would have more responsibility in representing the views of others.

**The very good partnership between the parents and the school supports the pupils' learning very well.**

13. The school rightly regards the parents as key members of the school community with a vital part to play in the education of their children. All the parents at the pre-inspection meeting, together with the overwhelming majority who replied to the questionnaire, felt that the school was a friendly place and that the staff were very approachable. They are very proud of the school and support the view that it provides a warm family atmosphere where their children are taught well and reach their full potential. They also feel that their children leave the school as well-rounded individuals with good manners and good personal standards.
14. Parents at the meeting were very positive about the need for appropriate homework to be set. They are well informed about the agreed policy, especially about the amount to be done in each year group. It was clear from discussions with pupils that parents support their children very well at home. Some pupils mentioned that they had mathematics books at home that they worked from in addition to the homework that the school sets. Parents are welcomed into the school as helpers. This not only benefits the school, but some parents have also benefited from the formal training they receive that has enabled them to become qualified classroom assistants.
15. Parents' views are taken into account through the parents' consultative group, which has representatives from each year group. In addition to this there is an active Parents and Teachers Association that raises funds through social events. All but a very small minority of parents agree that the school is led and managed well and that they are made to feel a part of it.

**WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

The inspection team did not find any significant areas for improvement. In order to improve further the school should continue its very good practice and implement the actions identified in the school development plan.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
17	33	44	6	0	0	0

*The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	311
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	3
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	24
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	3.4
National comparative data	5.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1*

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	26	20	46

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	22	25
	Girls	19	19	19
	Total	41	41	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (89)	89 (90)	96 (96)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	25	26
	Girls	19	19	19
	Total	42	44	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (90)	96 (98)	98 (93)
	National	82 (82)	86 (85)	87 (86)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2*

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	27	25	52

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	25	27
	Girls	25	24	25
	Total	51	49	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	98 (100)	94 (100)	100 (97)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	24	27
	Girls	25	24	25
	Total	49	48	52
Percentage of pupils	School	94 (92)	92 (92)	100 (97)



at NC level 4 or above	National	68 (65)	69 (68)	75 (71)
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*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	263
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### *Teachers and classes*

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	35

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	45

### *Financial information*

Financial year	1999/00
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	£
Total income	455,234
Total expenditure	449,500
Expenditure per pupil	1494
Balance brought forward from previous year	1162
Balance carried forward to next year	6896

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	301
Number of questionnaires returned	175

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65 (113)	31 (55)	4 (7)	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57 (100)	39 (69)	1 (2)	0	2 (4)
Behaviour in the school is good.	57 (99)	39 (68)	2 (4)	0	2 (4)
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43 (76)	45 (78)	9 (15)	3 (5)	1 (1)
The teaching is good.	71 (125)	27 (48)	1 (1)	0	1 (1)
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27 (48)	55 (96)	13 (23)	3 (6)	1 (2)
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61 (106)	34 (59)	4 (7)	2 (3)	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	79 (139)	20 (35)	0	0	1 (1)
The school works closely with parents.	47 (82)	45 (79)	5 (9)	1 (2)	2 (3)
The school is well led and managed.	71 (125)	26 (46)	2 (3)	0	1 (1)
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62 (109)	35 (61)	1 (2)	0	2 (3)
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23 (41)	46 (80)	22 (39)	2 (3)	7 (12)