



# Dr Walker's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Fyfield

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 115125  
**LEA** ESSEX LEA  
**Inspection number** 279518  
**Inspection dates** 8 May 2006 to 9 May 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs. Helen Ranger LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Walker Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		CM5 0RG
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01277 899298
<b>Number on roll</b>	156	<b>Fax number</b>	01277 899814
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs. Vanessa Minihane
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 April 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Linda Sherman

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school serves the village of Fyfield and its surrounding area. Although still smaller than average, it has grown in recent years. It is popular with parents and regularly oversubscribed. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is quite low and there are a high number of pupils who have statements of special educational need. When admitted to the Reception class, children have an average range of attainment.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with the school's view that its effectiveness is good. Pupils achieve well. They show very positive attitudes to learning and behave well. They are given an excellent start in the Foundation Stage (the Reception class) where extremely good provision enables them to reach above expected standards. By Year 6, pupils continue to reach standards that are above average overall. Teachers are rightly determined to improve further the proportion of pupils who achieve higher than average levels in national tests, especially in mathematics and science. Teaching is good overall and pupils thoroughly enjoy their education. However, the quality of teaching varies across the school as a whole, from satisfactory to outstanding. Pupils will benefit if the few lessons that are no better than satisfactory are eliminated. Good practice is often evident in marking and in the presentation of pupils' work and this also needs to become the norm in all classes. The curriculum is good and well planned to meet the range of learning needs. The school also provides good quality care and support for all pupils. Leadership and management are good and ensure that the school gives good value for money. The staff work well as a team under the headteacher's effective leadership. They ensure the effective inclusion of pupils from all backgrounds and of all capabilities. Staff are supported well by an energetic and capable team of governors. The school has maintained the strengths identified by its previous inspection in 2000 and addressed most of the areas that needed improvement then. With the welfare and achievement of its pupils firmly at the centre of its work, it has a good capacity to continue to improve.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Extend the good and outstanding practice in teaching throughout the school.
- Make sure that marking and the presentation of work are consistently of a high standard.
- Continue to implement the plans to ensure that the more capable pupils reach higher than average levels of attainment, especially in mathematics and science.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils, including those with learning difficulties, achieve well. Children in the Foundation Stage make rapid progress in the relatively short time they have in school as part-time or full-time pupils. By Year 2, in recent years, pupils have reached standards in the annual teacher assessments in reading, writing and mathematics that are broadly in line with the national average. Because of the good quality of teaching in the younger classes, the current Year 2 pupils are on track to reach higher than average standards this year. Overall performance in the national tests in Year 6 has been above average for the past few years because so many pupils reach at least the expected Level 4. The school's results for the last three years have shown that good progress has been made by the oldest pupils compared with their test results when they were in Year 2. The school sets challenging targets for its pupils. These were met in 2005

for the proportion reaching Level 4, but the Level 5 targets were missed. While an above average proportion of pupils reached Level 5 in English, fewer than average did so in mathematics and science. Teacher assessments of the current Year 6 indicate an improving picture in mathematics this year, partly as a result of an initiative to raise standards. The next challenge for the school is to ensure that the more capable pupils reach Level 5 even more consistently by the time they leave the school.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of their development, is good. They are polite and generally well behaved. Their behaviour is exemplary at times, but not yet outstanding overall as a few pupils need regular reminders in order to settle to their lessons. Pupils have an enthusiasm for learning that helps them to make good progress. They are confident that they will be treated fairly by adults and are taught how to keep themselves safe in and out of school. They are proud of their school and particularly mention the impact of the new Year 6 playleader scheme. Younger pupils report that this scheme has improved their enjoyment of lunchtimes. They also like the 'friendship bench', which is looked after by pupils who take turns to be 'playground pals'. Pupils make a good contribution to village life, take part in church and community events and raise substantial sums of money for charity in the process. Pupils know their views are taken seriously and can influence decision-making through the school council. For example, they offer their views on school meals and playground activities, which shows their good understanding of what makes a healthy lifestyle. Their good progress in literacy and numeracy and a strong emphasis on information and communication technology, combined with activities that enable them to practise enterprise and teamwork, provide a secure basis for their future economic well-being. Attendance is satisfactory and in line with national averages.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

In the light of some disruptions to staffing over the past few terms, the school judges its teaching to be satisfactory. However, inspection evidence from lessons seen, the work in books, and the data on pupils' recent progress, indicate that the school is being rather modest. Overall teaching and learning are good, with some outstanding practice in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The outstanding lessons seen were characterised by high levels of enjoyment, purposeful activity and challenge for pupils of all attainments. The Reception class benefit from an excellent environment, which takes full advantage of the recently refurbished classroom and outside area. Pupils of all age groups generally behave and concentrate very well because of effective classroom management. They understand the purpose of their work and this motivates them. Adults have good relationships with the pupils. Teaching assistants make a

strong contribution and are particularly good at supporting pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The best lessons are characterised by thorough planning, good organisation and effective assessment. Marking is currently not of a consistently high quality in all classes, but new target setting and marking policies are beginning to have an impact. There has been good improvement in standards of presentation and handwriting in Years 1 and 2, an issue raised in the previous inspection. Even higher expectations of presentation now need to be as obvious in Years 3 to 6. For teaching to be of even better quality, the school needs to continue its efforts to ensure that all lessons are at least good.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. The school plans particularly effectively for mixed-age classes, which ensures that all pupils receive an appropriate curriculum. Areas for improvement are identified well from careful analysis of pupil achievement and progress. This has led, for instance, to improved standards of writing in Years 1 and 2 and is helping to ensure that the more able pupils have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. There is good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and they make progress because of the clear targets set for them. The quality of accommodation has been improved substantially in most year groups and contributes to the quality of learning. There are good opportunities for pupils to participate in activities outside lessons such as sport, music and art. The pupils are fortunate to benefit from an 'artist in residence' and specialist tuition for musical instruments. The school also encourages an appropriate range of visitors and members of the local community to extend the pupils' learning. For example, the school nurse supports the health education programme. The school is exploring ways of taking advantage of the national 'Extended Schools' initiative. As a result it has started hosting weekend and holiday sports clubs, which have benefited pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

This aspect is good. The pupils say that the school is a caring and safe place in which they feel happy and secure. They say that adults respond helpfully to any problems they have. Child protection arrangements have recently been reviewed and staff and governor training updated. These arrangements meet requirements. Other health and safety matters are taken seriously with appropriate procedures and risk assessments in place. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are well supported in school, as are those who are looked after in foster families or the local children's home. The school works successfully with other agencies to make sure that these pupils' needs are fully met and, as a result, they make good progress. Parents and carers feel welcome in the school and are encouraged to involve themselves in their children's education. Pupils like the new marking system and are pleased to have an opportunity to assess their own work. The further development of these arrangements should enable the school to offer even better academic guidance to its pupils.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The vast majority of parents and pupils are extremely satisfied with the school. In spite of the unsettled period last year which saw disruptions to staffing, the headteacher has successfully built a united team which is committed to further improvement. Careful monitoring of standards, the curriculum and the quality of teaching by the headteacher and senior staff have ensured continuing good provision for the pupils. Changes to the arrangements for how subjects are led have met with a very positive response from the teachers and the school has worked effectively with the local authority's primary leadership programme to ensure good practice, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Equal opportunities for pupils are promoted well within an ethos that, as a church school, is rooted firmly in Christian values. The governing body has several new members who bring a good range of relevant skills to the school and have rapidly developed a clear understanding of their role. Relevant training ensures they are well equipped for the job. Governors hold the school to account in a supportive but rigorous way and have well-considered plans to make the governing body even more effective. They take an active lead in aspects of school management such as the health and safety audits and the future of school meals. In spite of inspectors feeling that it underestimates the quality of its teaching, the school generally evaluates its performance accurately, knows how to maintain its strengths and how to act on relative weaknesses. Important partners such as the parents, pupils and other nearby schools are involved well in its development and their views are valued. The school's development plan is a comprehensive working document. It will be even more useful when the criteria for judging success are made clearer and easier to measure, as is planned. The school has continued to offer the good quality of education that was identified at its last inspection. Its capacity to improve further is good and it deserves its good reputation in the local community.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you all for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. You helped us to find out a lot about it. It was good to hear that you enjoy school enormously and that children get on so well together. We are pleased that your playtimes are fun and that the friendship bench and playleaders are working well. We discovered that there are many good things about your school. You do well in your work because your teachers make lessons interesting and challenging. Many of you take advantage of the extra activities on offer. We liked the improvements to the Reception class area and think that the youngest children get a very good start in school. We agree with your parents who told us how satisfied they are with your school. We think that Mrs Sherman has worked well with all your teachers to make sure that your school runs well. The teachers and governors work together well to make sure the school keeps on improving. We talked to them about some ways to make it even better. They agree with us that they would like all your lessons to be as good as the best ones and will keep trying to make this happen. We want them to carry on making sure that those of you who find learning quite easy do as well as you can, especially in mathematics and science. We also want all the teachers to mark your books in ways that help you to know how well you have done and what you need to do next. We were impressed with the way many of you set your work out so neatly and how you try to use your best handwriting when it matters. We would like all of you to try your best with these things. It was a pleasure to meet you. Carry on making the most of all your school has to offer.