



Walter Halls Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122456
LEA CITY OF NOTTINGHAM LEA
Inspection number 281268
Inspection dates 14 November 2005 to 15 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Keith Edwards LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Querneby Road
School category	Community		NG3 5HS
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0115 9537200
Number on roll	298	Fax number	0115 9537868
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs. Alison Coats
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr. Peter Strauss

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of three Additional Inspectors led by Mr Keith Edwards.

Description of the school

The school serves the suburban area of Mapperley and St Anne's and most of the pupils live locally. There are ten classes plus a Foundation Stage unit of full-time reception and part-time nursery age children. The ethnic background of the pupils is very diverse and an increasing number of pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. Two pupils are from asylum families. The range of socio-economic circumstances is broad. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is above average. A higher than average proportion of pupils are not at the school for the whole of their primary education, joining and leaving at other than the usual times. Attainment on entry is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well above most schools, although the proportion with statements of special educational need is lower.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. The key strength of the school is its ethos, which values every individual. The tone is modelled very effectively by the headteacher, who has established a team that is fully committed to the welfare of the pupils and raising their academic achievement. The climate promotes high expectations of the pupils' academic performance, behaviour and courteousness. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are happy to come to school. This is reflected in the positive response of the parents in the questionnaire and the attitude of the pupils. Although standards at Year 6 are below average, the pupils make good progress overall. The quality of education and of pupils' achievement is good. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress. The school has a clear understanding of its own strengths and weaknesses. It is aware of the limitations of its assessment systems and recognises the need for subject leaders to apply greater rigour in their monitoring of standards, to build effectively on the pupils' success in acquiring the basic numeracy and literacy skills in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, although more could be done to raise standards in writing and mathematics, the pupils achieve well overall. The pupils achieve well in science because they enjoy the practical approach. The governors provide good support for the work of the school but need to develop their role as critical friends. Nevertheless, the school is effective and has the capacity for continued improvement. It provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

In order to raise standards further, the school should:

- Continue to develop the role of subject leaders in monitoring their subjects with a clear focus on raising standards.
- Ensure that assessment systems are robust and are used effectively to plan work for different groups of pupils.
- Ensure the governing body has a sharper focus on raising standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Many pupils start school with very limited knowledge and poor literacy and social skills. Emphasis is placed successfully on promoting their personal and social development in the Foundation Stage and into Year 1. Although the standards pupils reach by the age of seven are still below average, they make good progress from the time they start school. Pupils enter Key Stage 2 well placed to benefit from the work that the school provides for them. As a result, standards continue to improve, although by the end of Year 6 they remain below average. Standards are lower in English than in mathematics and science. Nevertheless, given their very low starting point, pupils achieve well and most meet the challenging academic and personal targets set for them. The exception was in 2005, when a small proportion of pupils in Year 6 did not meet their targets. This led to an immediate review and the school has taken action to remedy this. A significant number of pupils have not attended the school for long and this limits their

attainment. Pupils who have special educational needs receive effective support and make good progress. Those who speak English as an additional language also make good progress with the support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and their behaviour is very good. Attendance rates are broadly average but improving as a result of many school initiatives. The school has taken positive steps to promote healthy lifestyles with the addition of a very popular salad bar at lunchtime and good provision for physical education. The pupils are given many opportunities to develop their social skills and are eager to take positions of responsibility such as playground 'peacemakers'. Older pupils run the school fruit shop, which has supported the drive to promote healthy eating. The school council value the trust placed in them by staff and work conscientiously to improve the facilities and range of activities in their school. Relationships between pupils are good and they show respect for each other's beliefs. This extends to their concern for their environment. They are confident of support from staff if it is needed and feel safe. Spiritual and cultural development are good, with assemblies providing knowledge and understanding of other faiths and opportunities for reflection. Displays of pupils' work reflect the cultural diversity of the work of the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The headteacher has successfully nurtured strong teamwork. Teachers and classroom assistants work very well together for the benefit of the children. The high quality relationships are a strong feature of the school and support the very good levels of discipline. Teachers use a good range of methods to gain the pupils' interest to make lessons enjoyable. There is a strong focus on speaking and listening to develop the pupils' confidence in expressing their ideas and this works well. 'Talking partners' are a key feature of many lessons and scientific investigations further promote language development. This emphasis on direct first-hand experiences is successful in helping the pupils to learn. From the Foundation Stage onwards, the teachers are effective in raising the pupils' self-esteem and in encouraging their personal development. In most lessons, the teachers are successful in matching the work set to the different ability groups and the marking is generally informative and helps the pupils to improve. However, this practice is not consistent and consequently the progress of some pupils is limited. On occasions, there is a lack of challenge for the higher-attaining pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and suits the needs of all learners. It gives pupils a thorough coverage of all subjects, with appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. However, the pupils need further opportunities to use computers to support their learning beyond their weekly visit to the information and communication technology (ICT) suite. Pupils enjoy learning because their work is carefully planned. For example, pupils spend blocks of time learning about humanities topics in depth and key skills are woven around exciting projects. Furthermore, the school provides very good opportunities for the pupils' creative and aesthetic development, with a particular emphasis on ceramics. Many pupils take part in the wide range of lunch and after-school clubs, with an outstanding feature being the residential visits available from Year 2 onwards. These offer the pupils many opportunities to extend their learning and build confidence. The school strongly promotes the benefits of a healthy lifestyle through its informative programme of personal and social education which includes teaching on the dangers of drink and drugs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, support and guidance are good. Health and safety procedures are clear and fully in place. The staff know the arrangements for child protection and the school works closely with outside agencies to support pupils at risk. The school values its relationship with parents to support their children's progress. There is good provision to promote pupils' personal development and well-being through the school's very positive ethos. Pupils are generally supported well in their learning, although the inconsistencies in marking and use of assessment data means that not all pupils know their levels and targets and how they can improve. Those who have special educational needs are identified quickly and monitored effectively, with individual learning programmes that enable them to achieve well. The provision for gifted and talented pupils is well organised but the impact is not yet reflected in improved standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for school improvement and provides dedicated leadership. He has been particularly successful in working with the Excellence in Cities Education Action Zone to enhance the opportunities for the pupils. The senior management team provide good support to the headteacher and they carry out their management responsibilities well. Staff morale is high and linked closely to the outstanding relationships and clear sense of teamwork. The headteacher is successfully developing the skills of other key staff and although the role of subject leaders is developing, it is not yet having sufficient impact on teaching and learning. The formal procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress lack rigour particularly in English and mathematics at Key

Stage 2. Arrangements for school self-evaluation are satisfactory. The governors are very supportive but are not sufficiently focused on the need to raise academic standards. Parents speak very highly of the school and are very satisfied with the quality of education and care their children receive. Resources are used well to improve the school's work and to secure good value for money.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	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	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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

The team of inspectors really enjoyed their visit to your school earlier in the week. We were thrilled that you made us so welcome and that you were working so hard. What a lovely school you have and it seems to be getting better and better; I can really understand why you enjoy it so much. Mr Strauss and the staff really work hard to make sure that there are many exciting things for you to do to make school interesting. All of the staff make a very good job of looking after you and we can tell that you are doing your best to learn in class. In fact, there are many things that make your school special. Here are some of them: - You clearly try to do your best to learn in lessons and are making good progress. Well done! - Everybody understands the school rules and you behave extremely well. - Everybody tries to be friendly, thoughtful and helpful. - Mr Strauss is a good headteacher who wants you all to enjoy school and to do well. - The school provides a super range of activities and lessons to keep you interested. But, of course, there are still things that can be done to make your school even better: - Firstly, we know that you can do even better with your work, especially your writing and mathematics, especially as you get older. - We are asking your teachers to plan lessons a little more carefully, especially in literacy, to make sure that what you are learning is neither too hard nor too easy. - We are asking the governors to keep a more careful eye on what is going on in class. - We hope that you will be able to use computers more often to help you to learn. We wish you all the very best for the future.