



# Walton Oak Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 134557  
**Local Authority** Surrey  
**Inspection number** 282608  
**Inspection dates** 22–23 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Christopher Gray

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Ambleside Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Community		Walton-on-Thames
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		KT12 3LN
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01932 259604
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	428	<b>Fax number</b>	01932 259605
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr William Cowap
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Richard Evans
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is bigger than most primary schools. The school was formed in 2004 by the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools, when the present headteacher was appointed. Although the buildings are currently separated by over 200 yards, a new school is almost ready. Most pupils are of White British heritage and few speak English as an additional language. There are more pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities than in most schools.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a rapidly improving school whose overall effectiveness is currently satisfactory. On amalgamation, the new school inherited problems of very low standards and underachievement. Good leadership and management, under the outstanding direction of the headteacher, have halted a period of decline and turned pupils' achievement round, so that it is now satisfactory and improving. Current standards are below average. They are higher than those of previous years and are rising, but they could still be higher. The changes in the school are summed up by one parent, who wrote, 'My child has done very well in the last year at Walton Oak and you can tell how well structured the lessons and activities are'.

The chief tool in improving pupils' achievement has been a very comprehensive system of assessing their attainment in English and mathematics, from which programmes of support for individual pupils are designed. This has led to some pupils making good progress in these subjects because teachers now have higher expectations of how much they can achieve. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress towards the goals expected of them because of good teaching and very good systems of assessment.

Pupils receive a good quality of care, guidance and support. This has not only improved their progress in basic skills but also ensures that they are safe and well cared for. Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school and make an important contribution to its development. One boy said how much he had enjoyed working on an environmental project concerned with the new school - set to open in January. All pupils have been involved in looking at the plans and walking the nearly-finished site.

Evidence of the school's good capacity to make further improvements is seen in the rigorous approach to developing teaching. The headteacher has an exceptionally accurate knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of all his staff, which he has used to improve pupils' learning. An example is the use of objectives for learning in English and mathematics lessons which are tailored to the abilities of different groups. This enables pupils to learn at their own level, though not all teachers are yet as effective in planning in this way. Some teachers write detailed comments in pupils' books as to how they can improve their work. One girl said this 'helps you try harder'. However, not all teachers do this well.

The curriculum is enriched by after-school activities and by links with sports and arts groups. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects. The new building will provide good access to computers - a lot of which are already in use - but the extent to which pupils have used computers till now has varied from class to class.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards of pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science through greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning.
- Give pupils more opportunities to use their ICT skills in other subjects.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards have risen from very low in recent years to be below average currently. This is not reflected in the Year 6 national test results because that group of pupils left the infants with exceptionally low standards. Some pupils underachieved in the interim, but school records show that most pupils made satisfactory progress last year and some made good progress. Standards are expected to be higher in 2007 and higher still in 2008, and these predictions are solidly based on rigorous and regular testing and analysis.

Children enter nursery with very low skills, especially in personal development and communication. Recent changes in provision and assessment have led to these children making good progress, so that they now enter Year 1 with skills that are close to the county average, rather than below as in previous years. Standards by Year 2 are currently below average, but are rising. All groups of pupils achieve at similar rates, though improved provision for pupils with learning difficulties enables many of these pupils to progress at a faster rate than expected.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school, and are enthusiastic learners particularly when lessons are of high quality. Most pupils attend well though figures fall a little below average because of a very small number of families whose children have more absences than most.

Pupils have good relationships with teachers and other adults. Behaviour is good throughout the school. Pupils feel that they are in a safe environment where adults are easily approachable. They say that bullying is rare and is effectively dealt with by staff. The school council takes its responsibilities seriously and pupils are confident that their views are listened to. Parents who responded to the questionnaire were overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They respect the feelings of others and have a good awareness of their beliefs. Older pupils are keen to act as trained mentors, house captains and playtime helpers. Year 2 pupils delight in being made responsible for 'buddying' younger children at playtime. Pupils have a good awareness of the benefits of choosing healthy food and enjoy the good range of opportunities for physical exercise. Pupils' improving skills in English, mathematics and ICT prepare them appropriately for the next stage in their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The causes of past underachievement have been closely analysed by the school and effective action taken to remedy them. A number of new and experienced staff have been recruited. The impact of this is seen in examples of good and outstanding teaching observed. Such lessons move at a fast pace to hold pupils' attention. Interactive whiteboards are used well to increase pupils' interest, as in a Year 6 lesson where pupils watched a snippet of a film about the 'Titanic' to inspire them to write from different viewpoints. Activities are pitched at the right level to match pupils' abilities.

All teachers plan separate learning objectives for different groups in English and mathematics and some extend this to other lessons. However, there are occasions when the activities given to pupils are not sufficiently focused on the objective for each group, and pupils enjoy these lessons less. Some teachers make frequent, detailed comments on how pupils can improve; others use such remarks infrequently or restrict comments to praise.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, with areas of strength, and meets the needs of most pupils. The provision for English and mathematics has been revised following the latest guidance and this contributes to the improved progress which pupils now make in those subjects. Pupils do not have enough opportunities in all classes to use computers in a range of subjects.

The curriculum provides well for pupils' personal, social and health education and makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Enrichment of the curriculum is good. Regular visitors to the school help capture the interest of pupils, such as the Indian dancers and the theatre group, who visited during the inspection. The school makes very good provision for after-school clubs for all year groups on every day. These are well-attended and greatly appreciated.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The staff are highly committed to the care of pupils, as reflected in the many high quality procedures for safeguarding their welfare. The school's systems for assessing risks and checking on staff appointments exceed the latest guidance and are exemplary. The school identifies vulnerable pupils quickly and provides well for their individual needs. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress towards their learning targets because they are well supported by an effective team. The school works very well with outside agencies to provide good support for pupils. A good example is the

support for pupils with English as an additional language. One pupil said that this was one of the things he would remember most about the school. Pupils receive very good academic guidance in English and mathematics, and satisfactory guidance in other subjects. Teachers' assessments in the Foundation Stage provide very good guidance and good opportunities for parents to be involved.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. He has made significant inroads into strengthening the school's provision and pupils' achievement since the amalgamation. He ensures that there is a good atmosphere of care and support that is rigorously focused on improving teaching and learning. It is no mean task to draw together the staff of two schools that are both culturally and physically some distance apart and weld them into one unit. This he has done very effectively. Of this one parent wrote, 'I think Walton Oak has a great future and will continue to thrive'. The impending move to the new buildings can only support this excellent and clear vision for the whole school community.

The headteacher is well supported by the good leadership team and subject leaders. Working together, they have ensured that pupils' personal development and achievement have been significantly improved. Their evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is very accurate and has been key to the many improvements made recently. This work has been exceptionally well supported by the local authority. The effective governing body is in the process of transformation to increase its impact on achievement. Governors provide good support and meet all their statutory requirements.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

We enjoyed meeting so many of you during our recent visit to your school. You were very friendly and we thank you for being so welcoming. We could see how much you are looking forward to moving into your new building and we were sorry that we did not have the time to join the Year 3 pupils on their site walk-about.

You behave well and enjoy most of your lessons, especially when they are fun. You know how to stay safe and healthy and take your responsibilities seriously. Many of you remember your targets and you told us how much they help you to improve your work. Some of you told us how helpful teachers can be in commenting on your work when they mark it. We have asked the school to make sure that this sort of thing happens equally in all classes.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory education, but we could see that it is getting better all the time. Your teachers often check on the progress you make in English and mathematics and give you special help if they find you are falling behind. This has helped most of you to make the progress expected of you and many of you to do even better. We have asked your teachers to go on doing this, so that more of you can make good progress and reach higher standards in English, mathematics and science.

You have 30 brand-new computers and your headteacher tells me that even more are on order, ready for the new school. You had not always been able to use computers frequently in different subjects till these came. We have asked the school to make sure that you get lots of chances to use the new machines in all classes once you have moved out of the old buildings after Christmas.

I hope you enjoy your lovely new school.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Gray

Lead inspector