



Waltham Holy Cross Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115286
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 290191
Inspection dates 18–19 September 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. David Manuel

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Quendon Drive
School category	Foundation		Waltham Abbey
Age range of pupils	4–7		Essex EN9 1LG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01992 713191
Number on roll (school)	259	Fax number	01992 651686
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr. Peter Lisher
		Headteacher	Mrs. D Mooney
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few of them speak English as an additional language. The school has achieved the Artsmark Gold award. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is average. When children join the school in Reception, the range of attainment is variable, with the most recent entry below that expected for their age, particularly in communication and personal skills. Children come from a wide range of social backgrounds. There is a unit for funded nursery provision within the school.

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. Parents rightly feel that the school gives their children a very good start to their education. It is a happy and lively place where pupils' personal development is good and has a high priority. Pupils achieve well and make good progress. They grow in confidence during their time in school. They say that they enjoy school very much because they like learning and teachers look after them. Pupils are well cared for and lead active and healthy lives. The good teaching begins when children join the school as four-year-olds. They talk happily about their ideas as they play freely with each other or choose from a good range of stimulating activities. Good teaching continues throughout Years 1 and 2. Teachers create a positive climate for learning and ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well and most reach or exceed the targets set for them. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 play an important part in the life of the school because through the school council they can express their views and discuss matters which are important to them. Pupils' behaviour is good. They work well together and enjoy taking responsibility. The good curriculum is enhanced by a number of activities outside normal lessons which add to the pupils' enjoyment of the school. These include exciting sessions preparing for music festivals, creative art displays and a French Club. A majority of pupils enter the school with below average standards. Good planning enables standards in reading and science to be above national averages by the end of Year 2. In writing and mathematics, pupils reach average levels but there is insufficient challenge to extend all the more able pupils to reach the higher levels expected of them in these subjects. The school provides good value for money because the safety, well-being, enjoyment and achievement of pupils are at the heart of its work. Good leadership and management ensure that the school has an accurate view of its effectiveness. Subject leaders have improved their confidence and influence since the previous inspection. The school has clear and relevant priorities and clear strategies for achieving them. Its capacity to improve is good because staff are working together to examine performance carefully and make suitable improvements. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) by pupils to develop skills and link with other subjects has improved since the previous inspection and this has been helped by an improvement in the number and quality of equipment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' standards in writing by providing more opportunities for writing in subjects in addition to English. - Make better use of assessment information in mathematics and writing to pitch work at the right level, in particular for the more able pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children join the school with a wide range of ability. For several years this has ranged between being in line with national expectations and being below expectations. By the end of Reception, children have made good progress and most reach the levels expected for this age. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout their time in the school in a number of subjects, particularly reading, science and creative subjects. In handwriting and mathematics, pupils reach the national average by the end of Year 2 but there is insufficient challenge to extend all the more able pupils to reach the higher levels expected of them. The school is aware of this and has introduced new tracking systems to bring this about. Pupils use computers confidently in a range of subjects to improve their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school immensely. Attendance is below the national average, but the school is doing all it can to improve it and levels are rising. Pupils understand the value of rules and as a result, their behaviour in lessons and in the playground is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils learn to cooperate and work together well in various activities, clubs and community events. As a result they leave the school as mature and sensible pupils, well adjusted for their next stage of learning. Pupils demonstrate responsibility through an effective school council which represents their views and the school responds accordingly. Pupils of all ages understand how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and explain the benefits of exercise and good diet. Opportunities for fund-raising at different events contribute further to pupils' personal qualities, enabling them to gain knowledge about working roles in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Even though the inspection took place early in the school year, in most classes teachers were managing and controlling pupils well. Relationships are strong and only very few pupils need reminding of what to do and how to behave. This creates a positive climate for learning. Very little time is wasted and so most lessons proceed at a good pace, ensuring that pupils learn quickly. Learning objectives are clear and precise in all classes and new assessment systems are used well in most subjects to help pupils to improve their work. In their planning, teachers identify groups of pupils of differing abilities. Extra support is provided for lower attaining pupils and extension work is often available for higher attainers. Teaching assistants work well to help those who need extra

support. Although there is considerable support for those who struggle most, the more able are not always stretched enough in writing and mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum and other activities are good. There is innovative provision for teaching literacy and numeracy. Classes are now set in Year 2 for literacy and numeracy, so that pupils of similar capability are taught together. There is excellent provision for teaching creative subjects (music, art and physical education) which has led to the school receiving an Artsmark Gold award. An outstanding feature is the way that the provision for these subjects is extended. Outside coaches help to teach physical education after school. Professional artists work alongside pupils during Arts Week and visiting musicians are part of the annual music festival. These inputs motivate and inspire pupils, leading to high achievement. An example is the mural on the outside of the school, with delightful images of the local area. This is just one of many outstanding examples of involvement with the local community. The new ICT suite provides good facilities but ICT is not yet fully embedded into the curriculum. There is a good range of clubs and educational visits, well supported by pupils. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides a good balance of taught activities and educational play.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support is good with some outstanding features. The school is very committed to the pupils' health, safety and welfare. Child protection procedures are firmly in place. Almost all parents strongly agree that the school is very caring and listens both to them and their children. They feel that they can discuss any problem and that it will be resolved. The Year 2 pupils befriend and look after Reception children at playtime. There is a strong programme of personal, social and health education. Good liaison with parents and outside agencies ensures that the support for pupils who need extra help is effective. The health and safety policy has just been updated and all procedures are fully in place. This is a school where children are cared for very well but the tracking of pupils' progress and setting of challenging targets is still at an early stage.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are effective. In the three years since her appointment the headteacher has ensured that all staff and governors work together as a committed team to provide the best education for the pupils. The school rightly has a good reputation within the local community and is regularly over subscribed. The roles of subject leaders, criticised by the previous inspection, have improved and are effective in providing a good all-round education for the pupils. Teaching is monitored regularly and resources are used efficiently to support pupils' learning. The governors support

the school's development well and closely monitor the improvements being made. The school has identified the need to extend the more able pupils' skills in writing and mathematics. New systems are in place to support this priority.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
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	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2
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

Dear children Waltham Holy Cross Infant School, Quendon Drive, Waltham Abbey, Essex, EN9 1LG Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited your school. Here are the things that we think are best about your school. - You enjoy coming to school, behave well and are happy working together. - We agree with you that your teachers look after you very well, help you a lot and plan a lot of interesting lessons and activities for you. - You do well at school and are well prepared for when you go on to the junior school. - Your school is well managed by the headteacher, teachers and governors. - You are getting better at using computers. These are the things that we think could be better: - We want you to improve your writing and have more chances to write in lessons. - We want your teachers to help you assess your work and do even better in mathematics and writing. You can play your part in these things and help to reach even higher standards. Keep working hard, you are a credit to your school. We wish you every success in the future. Yours sincerely David Manuel Lead inspector