

Walton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 123776 |
| Local Authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 314713 |
| Inspection date | 12 February 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Peter Clifton |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 144 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | James Beaty |
| Headteacher | Rachel Toal |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 April 2003 |
| School address | Meadow Lane Walton Street Somerset BA16 9LA |
| Telephone number | 01458 443675 |
| Fax number | 01458 841908 |

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|--------------------------|------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school, with five classes. Situated in a small village, most pupils attend from the immediate locality. Pupils come to the school with skills and abilities which vary from year to year but, taken collectively, are broadly at the level expected. Nearly all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average; many of them have difficulties with literacy. An acting headteacher was in post from September 2007. The headteacher took up the position in January 2008. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award.

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 make many positive comments about the school. One typical comment said: 'My child loves his school and is developing well with his learning'. Pupils clearly enjoy their time here and most attend regularly. They behave well and are keen to learn. Pupils say they especially like sporting activities. They are knowledgeable about keeping fit and healthy, which is strongly promoted through the good curriculum. The care of pupils is a priority and, as a result, pupils say they feel very safe and value each other's views.

Standards are above average and achievement is good. Children get off to a good start in Reception and settle very quickly. In Year 6, the current standards are better than those reached in 2007, and pupils are making good progress in literacy and numeracy which prepares them well for the future. The main reasons for pupils' good achievement are their positive attitudes and consistently good teaching. Teachers create a friendly atmosphere for learning and pupils are keen to answer questions to show what they know and understand. Pupils' work is marked regularly but teachers do not always indicate how pupils could improve on what they are doing. In addition, pupils across the school are not always sufficiently involved in assessing their own work and identifying targets to help themselves improve.

The newly-appointed headteacher has quickly gained a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders have recognised that the way the school measures progress and uses targets to help boost pupils' achievement is not good enough across the school. They have started to take firm steps to rectify this but developments are still at an early stage. Senior leaders have been quick to take action, for example in improving communication with parents. Good systems for monitoring and evaluation have ensured that the school has improved teaching so that it is consistent across the school. The school's development plan accurately identifies where improvements are needed and well-chosen actions are having a positive effect. As a result, the school has good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in Reception because of good teaching and a well-planned curriculum. The good start in school is helped by the strong links with the nearby pre-school provision. Relationships are very positive and children are happy, confidently talking about their learning. Opportunities for them to make their own choices about learning, such as through role-play, are well developed. Routines are well established and they take turns patiently. The children's individual learning profiles are of a good quality and show a broad range of their achievements and progress. The adults work together well as a team because they are effectively led.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve the tracking of individual pupils across the school to give a clearer picture of their progress and to help to set more appropriate targets for the future
- ensure assessment and marking give pupils a clear understanding about how they can improve, and involve them more in evaluating their own work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. In Reception, children make good progress and currently have speaking and listening skills which exceed expectations. In 2007, pupils reached average standards at the end of Year 2, and current standards are broadly similar. Leaders have rightly identified that more able pupils should reach the higher levels more consistently and have taken action to rectify this. Year 6 results in 2007 show that standards in English and mathematics were above average, and broadly average in science. Pupils are making better progress this year and standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. Throughout the school, rates of learning are good because of lively teaching and pupils' positive attitudes. Pupils with learning difficulties, particularly those with reading and writing problems, make progress similar to other pupils in the school. Those with disabilities make good progress in relation to their individual learning targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy and enjoy being at school. Pupils particularly like the spacious play areas, especially the multi-use games area, and make good use of these. Their behaviour in and around the school shows their good awareness of keeping safe and looking after others. Pupils recall enthusiastically the work done on the visiting 'life bus'. They say that any inappropriate behaviour is quickly dealt with by staff and that they are treated fairly. They talk knowledgeably about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and keenly take part in extra clubs and sporting activities. Pupils' acquisition of basic skills and good personal development ensure they are well prepared for their next stage of learning.

Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to school life. A school council has recently been set up to strengthen the pupils' voice in the school, but this has not yet had time to make a difference. Although pupils are active in raising funds for charities, there are too few planned opportunities for them to take on responsibility. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their moral and social development is particularly strong. However, their understanding of living in multicultural Britain is underdeveloped.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are well planned for the needs of different pupils, and what is to be learned is shared with all of the pupils. Teachers promote good relationships and ensure that the views of individual pupils are valued. Consequently, the pupils respond well to questions, often providing extended answers which explains their thinking clearly. In Reception, the children follow instructions well. In lessons, teachers give good feedback to pupils to help them understand how well they are doing and check on how the pupils feel about their own learning. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent because it does not always identify areas for improvement sufficiently well.

Interactive whiteboards are used well to capture pupils' imagination and interest. Pupils in Year 6 were successfully helped to interpret pie charts, because of the clarity of the information presented. In most lessons, learning is moved on quickly and there is usually good challenge

for the more able pupils. However, there are a few occasions when this does not happen, such as when too much time is spent completing straightforward calculations. Teaching assistants are deployed well in lessons. They support individual pupils confidently and are quick to provide additional help.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

In Reception, the good provision includes a wide variety of different activities, with good opportunities for pupils to choose for themselves. Throughout the rest of the school, topics are well planned and identify key learning skills. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support learning. Physical education is strongly promoted through planned activities, specialist teaching and good use of the outside areas. Achievement is celebrated in assemblies and through displays such as the Walton 'Tree of Achievement'. A weekly focus, such as being kind and considerate, encourages the pupils to think about their own and others' feelings. Although pupils learn about other cultures, such opportunities are not sufficiently well developed through the curriculum.

The pupils enjoy the good range of after-school activities and visits to different places, which are linked to topics. Older pupils are keenly anticipating the planned camping trip.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school looks after its pupils well, including those who are most vulnerable, and takes every step to ensure their health and safety. Adults deal quickly with any issues that arise and pupils feel that they are treated with kindness and consideration. Pupils say that they feel safe and valued and know that they can ask for help if it is needed. Requirements in relation to child protection and safeguarding pupils are in place. Teaching assistants often provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has good procedures in place to promote regular attendance.

Older pupils have targets to support learning and the pupils know these. These are helpful, for example to ensure that writing contains interesting descriptive words. However, leaders have rightly identified that targets are not developed well enough throughout the school. Pupils do not have sufficient information to be able to review these targets for themselves and to set new ones on a regular basis.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership arrangements have been sufficiently robust to ensure that improvement continues through the changes in headship. Governors have worked successfully to maintain the smooth running of the school through these changes and have carried out their roles well. Leaders know the school's overall strengths and weaknesses well and the development plan is a useful tool to support further improvement. A current focus is rightly to improve the numbers of pupils reaching Level 3 in Year 2. In the Foundation Stage, there is a culture of continuing improvement. The tracking of pupils' progress is not sufficiently robust to show how well pupils are doing or to set appropriate targets for the future. Teachers are therefore not quickly

identifying when pupils are not making sufficient progress so that they can provide extra challenge, help and support. Changes to improve this are already underway.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 3 |
| 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? | 3 |

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.

Annex A**Leadership and management**

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| 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 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

13 February 2008

Dear Pupils Inspection of Walton C of E Primary School, Street BA16 9LA

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and were impressed with your friendliness and good behaviour. The valuable information you gave us was a great help. We think your school gives you a good education.

What we most liked about your school:

- you are achieving well and reaching above average standards by the time you leave school
- you enjoy school and have very positive attitudes to learning
- your headteacher and other leaders have a good understanding about what needs to be improved
- you settle quickly in Reception, helped by the good contacts with your pre-school
- teaching is good and the curriculum is well planned
- you work well with each other and on your own in lessons
- the school ensures you are very safe and secure
- your parents and carers support the school well.

We have asked your headteacher and others to do these things:

- improve how the school measures your progress to make sure you do not fall behind
- improve marking so you have a clearer understanding about how to improve, and involve you more in evaluating your own work.

With your hard work and help, we think that your school will continue to improve.

Yours faithfully

Peter Clifton Lead Inspector

Annex B



13 February 2008

Dear Pupils

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Yours faithfully

Peter Clifton
Lead Inspector