

Walter Infant School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109869
Local Authority	Wokingham Borough Council
Inspection number	325048
Inspection date	18 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	274
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Phil Crowder-Johnson
Headteacher	Ms Vanessa Mitura
Date of previous school inspection	23 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Murray Road Wokingham RG41 2TA
Telephone number	01189 780 825
Fax number	01189 795 580

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- how well the school has improved provision and pupils' performance in writing, particularly for the more able
- how good provision is in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and how well children are progressing.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Walter Infant and Nursery is larger than average for a school of its type. It is popular and oversubscribed. Over three quarters of the pupils come from a White British background. The remaining proportion come from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. These difficulties and needs lie mainly in the areas of speech, language and communication. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children from three to four years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Walter Infant and Nursery is an outstanding school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to an exceptionally good start. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make outstanding progress because of high-quality teaching and an exciting curriculum. By the end of Year 2, standards are high. Excellent care, guidance and support, and a positive school atmosphere, lead to outstanding personal development and well-being for pupils.

High-quality leadership and management contribute considerably to the outstanding provision and the extremely positive outcomes for pupils. An experienced headteacher provides strong leadership and educational direction. She receives very good support from the deputy headteacher and other key staff. There is effective teamwork among the staff, and all are dedicated to doing the very best for the pupils. Performance is systematically monitored and reviewed. As a result, the school has a clear understanding of what it does well and takes successful action to bring about any needed improvements. The high standards and outstanding provision identified in the last inspection have been maintained and built on. Further improvements have been made to the curriculum and to pupils' writing. The school has an outstanding capacity to make further improvement. Community cohesion is promoted extremely well, as demonstrated by the school's positive ethos and the successful partnerships with other agencies and partner schools. Global cohesion is promoted very well through the curriculum. The school is successfully including and meeting the needs of different groups of pupils. Governors make a very good contribution to the school's effectiveness.

Parents hold positive views about the school, and the vast majority are extremely pleased with the care and education provided for their children. Pupils' progress, teaching, the care provided, and pupils' enjoyment receive particular praise. Typical comments from parents include 'extremely pleased with Walter', 'my child is making excellent progress' and 'excellent levels of care and teaching'. However, a significant minority who returned the questionnaire feel that communication could be better and that the school takes insufficient account of their concerns and views. Senior staff and governors are very keen to address this issue.

Standards by the end of Year 2 are high. They are well above average in writing and mathematics, and exceptionally high in reading. Pupils who need additional help with their learning make good progress because of the well-targeted support they receive. More-able pupils are challenged and extended, and this is evident from the high proportions attaining the higher levels. Improving provision and pupils' achievement in writing has been a priority since the last inspection. Good progress has been made in this area through effective planning and the development of teaching. The range of writing opportunities for pupils has been extended. Pupils write in a variety of styles and for different purposes. For example, in Year 2, pupils wrote interesting stories based on 'The Big Turnip'. High-quality discussion, skilful demonstrations and outstanding questioning by the teacher promoted pupils' writing extremely well. Pupils used powerful verbs, adjectives and interesting phrases to make their writing lively and exciting. Pupils have considerable opportunities to apply and develop their writing in other subjects. For example, they wrote interesting and factual accounts of famous people such as Martin Luther King, Charles Darwin and Claude Monet. In Year 2, they wrote clear evaluations of the hand puppets they designed and made. The presentation of pupils' work and the quality of handwriting is not always consistently good; however, information and communication technology (ICT) is used well by pupils to draft and edit their writing.

Outstanding teaching contributes to pupils' exceptional progress and high standards in a range of subjects. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning. As one pupil remarked, 'I love learning new stuff.' Teachers have high expectations of learning and behaviour. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and respond very well to their teachers' clear explanations and instructions. Questioning is used skilfully by teachers to challenge pupils' thinking and to check their understanding. Assessment is used effectively to plan teaching and to match activities and tasks to pupils' abilities and needs. As a result, pupils are challenged well and make outstanding progress. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in the case of those who need additional help with literacy and numeracy. Pupils are set clear individual learning targets in literacy and numeracy so they know what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum promotes outstanding progress for pupils and makes an exceptionally good contribution to their personal development. There are good links between subjects, and these add meaning and relevance to pupils' learning. Themed weeks, such as those related to science and history, are popular and exciting. The high-quality opportunities for investigative and practical work in science contribute to the high standards. ICT is used very well to support teaching and learning in a range of areas. Pupils in Year 1 used a computer program in mathematics competently to solve shape problems. Art is strength of the curriculum, particularly work with textiles. In the 'Big Bird Watch' project, pupils created felt collages of different species of bird. These were colourful and impressive, and showed considerable attention to detail. Visits and visitors enhance pupils' learning. Popular clubs include choir, French, recorders, tag rugby and tennis. Health and safety education is promoted extremely well across the curriculum.

Pastoral care and welfare of pupils are outstanding. There are highly effective procedures to safeguard pupils. Pupils feel safe and very well cared for. They know that there is always a grown-up they can turn to if they are upset or have a problem. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are courteous and friendly, and show great respect for others. They thoroughly enjoy their time at school, and this is shown by their enthusiastic participation in lessons and their above average attendance. Behaviour is often exemplary in lessons and around the school. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and show an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating and exercising regularly. Members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and have contributed to improving the library and lunchtime arrangements. The choir performs successfully to the local community. Pupils raise funds for a variety of national and global charities. Pupils at Walter are extremely well prepared for the junior years. By the time they leave, they have very good literacy and numeracy skills. In addition to these, their personal and social skills are extremely well developed.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enter the school with knowledge and skills broadly expected for their age. The Early Years Foundation Stage is extremely well led and managed, and there is strong teamwork among teachers and assistants. These factors contribute to the high-quality provision and the extremely positive outcomes for children. High-calibre teaching, outstanding attention to welfare, and a stimulating range of learning activities enable children to make outstanding progress. Children make exceptionally good gains in their personal and social development because of the very positive relationships established between adults and children. They quickly settle into routines, and share equipment and resources with their peers. A typical comment from a parent was 'My child settled into the Foundation Stage extremely well.' Children

thoroughly enjoy their learning and possess very positive attitudes. Children are inspired and motivated, and are growing into confident learners. Teachers and assistants provide a highly effective blend of activities which are led by adults and those that allow children to explore, be creative and work independently. Early reading skills are developing extremely well because of the careful attention paid to speaking, listening and letter sounds. Children also make very good gains in acquiring basic writing skills because of the wide opportunities provided. There is a wide range of high-quality outdoor apparatus and equipment to promote creative and physical development. Role-play areas are attractive and imaginative, and cover a wide range of topics, from spacecraft to life in Africa. By the end of Early Years Foundation Stage, children are very well prepared for their journey into Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of pupils' written presentation.
- Take effective steps to address the concerns and views of some of the parents.

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

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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

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

31 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Walter Infant School and Nursery, Wokingham, RG41 2TA

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we found. Yours is an outstanding school and one you can be very proud of.

These are the main strengths of the school.

- You thoroughly enjoy school and your attendance is good.
- Children in Early Years Foundation Stage get off to an excellent start.
- Your school is a friendly and pleasant place to learn in.
- You are making outstanding progress because of fantastic teaching.
- You benefit from an excellent range of learning activities, including clubs and visits.
- Behaviour is often outstanding in lessons and around the school.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.
- Staff take very good care of you and give you excellent support.
- You make really good contributions to the school and the wider community.
- Your headteacher leads the school extremely well. She receives very good support from other senior staff.

These are two points the school has been asked to look at to make it even better.

- Some of you could improve the neatness and presentation of your written work.
- The school should take steps to deal with concerns expressed by some parents.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. Keep up the good work. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Derek Watts

Lead Inspector