

Walford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116743
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	326438
Inspection date	26 February 2009
Reporting inspector	David Cox

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	190
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	Dawn Boaden
Headteacher	Marcella Scoles
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Walford Ross-on-Wye HR9 5SA
Telephone number	01989 562209
Fax number	01989 762898

Age group	4–11
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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:

- the effectiveness of the school's strategies for improving the progress of higher attaining pupils in mathematics.
- how effectively the curriculum improves pupils' basic numeracy skills in order to support their economic awareness
- the effectiveness of leaders at all levels in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school
- whether pupils' progress is satisfactory or good.

Evidence was gathered from the school's assessments of pupils' standards and achievements, curriculum planning documents and the school improvement plan, discussions with the acting headteacher, the headteacher mentor, staff, pupils and the chair of governors. Parents' responses to the Ofsted questionnaire were analysed. 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

Walford Primary School is smaller than average. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average as is the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the Reception class. The school is led by an acting headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Walford Primary School provides its pupils with a good education. The clear leadership of the acting headteacher, the good teaching and the interesting curriculum ensure pupils achieve well. When the care, guidance and support are added to these strengths, they result in pupils' good personal development.

Pupils are happy at the school and rate their teachers highly. They are responsible, confident learners, with high self-esteem. Their good attitudes, work habits and teamwork are evident from their involvement in a wide range of school activities. Pupils feel they have a strong voice and make a valuable contribution to the school through the school council. On their recommendation, new goals with nets were purchased, the Huff and Puff provision at playtimes extended and a talent show was organised. Pupils make a positive contribution to the wider community through recycling schemes and raising funds for local and national charities. They provide music and dance for the local playgroup fete. Pupils take advantage of good opportunities to eat healthily at school and are keenly aware of the need for physical fitness, with many eagerly joining in the wide range of out-of-school sporting events.

Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for in school. They are polite and behave well. For the vast majority of pupils, attendance is above average. However, a very small number of persistently poor attenders drag the overall figure down to broadly average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are keen to learn about their own and other cultures. Pupils articulate a good understanding of a range of faiths. The school has taken positive steps to build its work in this area in order to promote community cohesion through teaching, learning and the curriculum. It rightly recognises the need to provide pupils with further opportunities to develop a greater sense of the cultural diversity of Britain. Good development of basic skills and the ability to work independently mean that pupils are well prepared for secondary school and their later lives.

Pupils make good progress and achieve well. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, standards are above the national average. Children enter Reception with skills and experiences broadly at the level expected for their age and get off to a positive start. By the end of Reception, their attainment is above the level expected for their age in most areas of learning. For the vast majority of pupils, this good progress continues throughout Years 1 to 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils because of the good support they receive. Pupils make very good progress with their reading and standards because of the rigorous approach adopted. Teachers make effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to engage pupils' interests and enhance the quality of pupils' work. Most pupils do well in mathematics, though a small minority of middle-attaining pupils do not make the same good progress. This is because teachers do not ensure consistently that tasks are matched closely enough to the needs of all pupils. Whilst some teaching is outstanding, occasionally some teachers do not respond quickly enough when boys' attention wanders, and this inconsistency results in a slowing of progress.

The good curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well. It is enriched with activities of high quality, including a wide range of out-of-school clubs and educational visits. The curriculum is suitably responsive to local circumstances by ensuring it encompasses topics relating to the locality, including local farms, and developing the pupils' understanding of the community around them.

The good care, guidance and support pupils receive are based on secure relationships between pupils and staff and effective communication with parents. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and child protection are rigorous, and staff are fully aware of their responsibilities. Good arrangements exist for preventing bullying or harassment, and incidents are rare and dealt with effectively. Pupils' diverse needs are identified early and support structures are put in place quickly to meet learning, emotional and pastoral needs. Academic guidance, based on effective assessment, is good. Pupils know how well they are doing through regular feedback. However, although all pupils have personal targets, their use in daily lessons is inconsistent.

The school's success is due to its good leadership and management. Since its last inspection, there has been a strong focus on improving pupils' standards and achievement and the school has made good progress. It is well placed for the future. The school's view of its strengths and weaknesses is fairly accurate, although it is rather cautious about recognising its successes. Whilst leaders monitor the work of the school well, they do not always ensure all teachers apply teaching policies consistently. Parents regard the school highly, and appreciate the extra support and opportunities the school affords their children. As the previous headteacher is acting as mentor to the acting headteacher, a small minority of the parents who responded to the questionnaire were not clear about who is leading the school. The inspectors found that the acting headteacher has responsibility for leading and managing the school and is exceedingly well supported by the mentor headteacher. However, the school recognises that this has not been made absolutely clear to parents. The governors fulfil a range of roles effectively; they act as a critical friend, support the school and hold it to account for its performance.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Teaching is good overall, enabling children to make good progress particularly in the areas of language and communication because of the strong daily focus on speaking and listening skills. Progress is also good in number, counting and in social development. Progress in creative development and in knowledge and understanding of the world is closer to satisfactory. However, new measures are now in place to improve these areas. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good because staff make learning interesting and enjoyable and care for children well. Good induction procedures and the involvement of parents enable children to settle quickly and become confident learners, happy to investigate, play cooperatively and share with others. Assessment procedures are good and include regular, focused observations of each child. Staff provide good support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and as a result they make good progress, particularly in the area of emotional development. Arrangements for safeguarding children are good. With the support of the acting headteacher, provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. The curriculum is well planned and takes good account of the interests and needs of each child. Resources for outdoor play are excellent and used effectively to promote all areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all staff apply whole-school teaching policies consistently.
- Raise standards in mathematics for middle-attaining pupils by ensuring all staff match tasks more closely to the needs of all pupils.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	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
The extent to which 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	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 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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

27 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Walford Primary School, Walford, HR9 5SA

Thank you all very much for making us feel so welcome in your school when we visited recently. You and your parents are rightly proud of Walford. Like you, we think your school is good. Here are some of the many good things to report about your school.

Your headteacher and staff want the best for you. Because you enjoy school, with most of you attending well and working hard, you reach above average standards. You have lots of other exciting opportunities through visits and many of you take part in a wide range of local events. It is clear that you go to a caring school. Your behaviour is good and you have good attitudes to learning. You show a good awareness of how to stay healthy and enjoy the many sporting activities that are available to you. We like the way the school council works to improve your school. You have a good knowledge and understanding of cultures from around the world, but are less familiar with the different cultures represented in Britain.

Almost all of you make good progress with your work. Younger children get off to a flying start in Reception and this good progress continues throughout your time at Walford. Those of you who need extra help make the same good progress because the staff give you lots of attention to help you learn. There are lots of good things happening in your classrooms. You have lovely relationships with all the staff. Teachers know you well and generally ask you to do quite demanding work. Occasionally, however, they do not give you challenging enough work in mathematics.

To make your school even better we have asked your teachers to check more closely that they are all doing the same good things when planning your lessons and to give you more demanding work in mathematics so that you can really do your best. You can help by making sure you all listen carefully to your teachers in lessons.

Thank you again for making us feel so welcome.

Yours sincerely

David Cox

Lead inspector