

# Walter Halls Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 122456             |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | City of Nottingham |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 327733             |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 21–22 October 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Lynne Blakelock    |

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.

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| <b>Type of school</b>  | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>   | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>   | 3–11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>  | Mixed  |
| <b>Number on roll</b>  |  |
| School (total)   | 379  |
| 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                                     | 95   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>   | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair</b>   | Mr David Birch   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>   | Mr Peter Strauss   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 14 November 2005   |
| <b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>                              | Not previously inspected   |
| <b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>   | Not previously inspected   |
| <b>School address</b>  | Querneby Road<br>Mapperley<br>Nottingham<br>Nottinghamshire<br>NG3 5HS |
| <b>Telephone number</b>  | 0115 9537200   |
| <b>Fax number</b>  | 0115 9537868   |

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|--------------------------|--------------------|
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This large school takes pupils from an increasingly wide area of the city. Historically, it has served mainly Mapperley and St Anne's but 40% of pupils now come from outside these districts. This is partly due to the school integrating many pupils from a neighbouring school that closed in August 2008. There is a very wide variation in the social and economic backgrounds of pupils. However, a high percentage of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The attainment on entry of most nursery children is well below expectation compared to nationally. Although an extremely small percentage of pupils has a statement of special educational need, an above average percentage has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Forty nine% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, which is high for a primary school. However, the percentage speaking English as an additional language is below average at present, although it is rising. A small number of pupils are refugees or asylum seekers. A much higher percentage of pupils than found nationally, move to and from the school in each academic year.

The school has achieved Healthy Schools Gold Award status, the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the second time, Activemark and Artsmark Silver. It has recently achieved the Financial Management in School Standard (FMIS). It is a 'Centre of Good Practice' in the management and development of support staff. Nursery and Reception classes provide for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). An external provider runs after-school childcare provision on the school site.

## 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, which is effective in all aspects of its work. A major strength is in its nurturing of pupils and the value that it places on all of them. The school is enriched particularly well by the cultural diversity of its pupils. Good personal development opportunities and the effective curriculum enable pupils of many different backgrounds to grow and develop. They understand and respect the beliefs and lifestyles of others, through learning, playing and contributing together to the school and wider community. The school has worked successfully to help pupils develop healthy lifestyles and to take on responsibilities, which together with a sound range of skills, results in their good personal development. Parents are strongly supportive of the school's work, with typical comments praising, 'This loving and caring school,' where 'Children are valued and their successes encouraged and acknowledged.'

The school's care for pupils who are vulnerable or troubled is excellent. It is strengthened by its excellent partnerships with external agencies, which ensure that pupils receive very effective help to settle to learning. This, together with effective procedures to keep pupils safe and protected, and good academic support, result in good care, guidance and support of pupils.

Due to the strong leadership and management, at all levels, the school has made good progress since the last inspection. Areas for improvement that were identified at that time have been addressed, including systems for monitoring pupils' academic progress. However, the use made of information about pupils' progress is under-developed. Good planning for school improvement has been transferred into actions through effective subject leadership, as well as by governors who are increasingly strong partners in moving the school forward.

Pupils make good progress through the school from their well below average starting points in the EYFS, due to good quality teaching and learning. However, by the end of Year 6, standards, which are below average overall, are lower in mathematics than in English and science. This is because assessment of pupils' progress has not been detailed enough in mathematics. Although the school's results indicate boys' achievement is below that of girls' overall, inspection evidence showed that boys are making good progress in lessons, helped by interesting tasks, which involve them in learning. Whilst a wide range of activities are provided, the level of challenge is not always accurate enough to enable pupils to make the progress that they could.

The good curriculum, which focuses primarily on raising standards in literacy and numeracy, is broadened by themes and learning across subjects. This is leading to pupils' greater enjoyment of learning and a more skills based programme. Visits, visitors and out-of-lesson activities are important because they extend learning, opening pupils' eyes to the world away from their immediate environment. Although provision for information and communications technology (ICT) has improved, there are not yet enough opportunities to use computers in other subjects.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills well below the expected levels for their age, especially in relation to social skills and language development. They settle quickly into the EYFS routines and are happy and confident. They enjoy their time in the EYFS, making good progress in all areas of learning because teaching is good and the EYFS is led and managed well. Teaching provides the children with a good range of activities, both indoors and outdoors,

to excite and stimulate their interest and help them to develop their skills as inquisitive and independent learners. The outdoor environment enhances the learning experience of children. However, this is a developing area of the school's work, with plans in place to allow children free access to outdoor learning throughout the day. Children are friendly and behave well. Relationships are good at every level and children from different backgrounds play together in harmony. Staff are sensitive to children's needs and support their personal development in many ways. Good links with parents encourage children to enjoy school and feel safe.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Enable standards to rise through the school, particularly in mathematics, by further developing the use of assessment data.
- Extend the use of ICT across other subjects as an additional tool for learning, and to allow pupils to practise their skills.
- Ensure that all tasks offer a good level of challenge to pupils of all abilities.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

While standards are below average by the end of Year 6, pupils have achieved well, making good progress as a result of effective teaching and learning. The rate of pupils' progress through Key Stage 1 has quickened, due to the school's participation in the Communication, Language and Literacy Development (CLLD) project. Although the standards in Key Stage 1 assessments remained below average overall in 2008, they were an improvement on 2007, in writing, and more so in reading. Key Stage 2 results in 2008 for English, mathematics and science indicate that Year 6 pupils' standards were below average. These also indicate pupils performed least well in mathematics where their Key Stage 2 targets were not met. Overall, results reflect the impact of the high percentage of pupils who join or leave the school at other than expected times, as a significant number do not stay in the school for a full key stage. Those who find learning more difficult than most make good progress because they are supported effectively by teaching assistants. While boys' results show they do not perform as well as girls by a greater margin than seen nationally, their learning needs and preferred ways of learning are catered for well in lessons and their progress is good.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development, is good. They play happily together, showing a keen understanding of right and wrong, and a sense of fair play. Their cultural development is exceptional because the school takes advantage of the diverse cultures of pupils to educate them about different lifestyles and values. Consequently, pupils respect each others differences and live harmoniously in this inclusive school. Behaviour is good in lessons and in the playground. Pupils understand the need to keep safe and act appropriately in school. They make healthy choices with regard to their eating and exercise habits. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to play an active role in school life. This is seen, for example, in their recent contributions to homework and behaviour policies. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities. Older pupils, for example, are trained as playground 'peace makers' to help other pupils resolve minor problems. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average and the school is taking rigorous action to improve it further. Overall, they are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teachers' good knowledge of their subjects and very positive relationships with pupils are strengths. Pupils enjoy learning when their tasks are interesting, offer them problem-solving tasks and encourage them to learn for themselves. Occasionally, they find it hard to engage and concentrate when lessons are too directed by the teacher. Computer based teaching is used well by staff as an additional learning tool. Lessons often have a brisk pace and offer pupils a variety of activities to keep them focused. Although all lessons offer a range of tasks to suit the different levels at which pupils are working, sometimes the level of challenge is not as close a match as it should be and this slows the rate of progress. Regular opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers, adds significantly to the awareness of their progress and how they can go on to improve their work.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

There is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy, and education for health and safety is good. The curriculum in most instances engages pupils well because its strong emphasis on a practical approach to learning is implemented effectively. Enrichment activities strongly enhance pupils' enjoyment, their good personal development and their contribution to the community. Outstanding residential visits for pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 strongly promote pupils' personal development and their ability to acquire the social skills needed for the future. The curriculum contributes well to the pupils' cultural development because it makes good use of pupils' own cultural heritage to extend their understanding and that of others. This has included work on black slavery, which has motivated black boys to read and write. The curriculum is also developing a global dimension, with links with schools in Columbia and Jamaica and the introduction of Spanish into the curriculum. The school is making meaningful links between most subjects. Since the last inspection, it has also increased pupils' use of ICT across the curriculum but more development is needed in this area. A comprehensive programme of activities for those with particular gifts and talents is in place.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The school provides a high level of pastoral care, and pupils feel secure and happy in their relationships with staff. Procedures for child protection and for making sure pupils are safe in school, and on visits, are fully in place. An outstanding feature of the school's work is the role of the learning mentor who works in close partnership with the headteacher and other senior staff to coordinate highly effective support for all vulnerable pupils. Furthermore, pupils who find learning more difficult are supported well by teaching assistants who are trained and deployed effectively to meet pupils' special needs. School leaders have recently introduced a more detailed tracking system to help teachers closely monitor the progress of pupils but this is not yet fully implemented. Marking identifies strengths in pupils' work and helps them understand areas for improvement.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Strong leadership and management at all levels are the key to the good progress that the school is making in all aspects of its work. It ensures the school's good capacity for further improvement. Led effectively by the headteacher, who knows the school well and has a very clear understanding of where the school needs to improve, it is strengthened by well-planned systems which are regularly monitored and evaluated by effective subject leaders. Nowhere is this more evident than in the recent very smooth transition of pupils from a school that has closed, who are settled and happy. The school has also used the opportunities brought about by the diverse cultures of its pupils exceptionally well to add richness and variety not just to school life, but also within the local and wider community. Professional development of the committed staff, who work well as a team, focuses on priorities for school improvement and ensures that they have the necessary skills to move pupils' learning and development forward. This includes assessment practices, which although established, do not yet make full use of data to aid pupils' progress. Governors' greater involvement and detailed knowledge of the school's performance since the last inspection have led to their increased ability to challenge its work.

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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 |
|---|----------------|

### 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?   | 1   |
| 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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 3 |
| 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 |

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                          | 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 | 3 |

## The quality of provision

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>       | 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

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <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 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?   | 1   |
| 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**

23 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Walter Halls Primary School, Nottingham, NG3 5HS

Thank you for making us very welcome, when we visited your school. We all enjoyed talking with you and listening to your views about your school. We were pleased to hear you are happy at school and feel safe. You know that the teachers care about you and also look after you very well. New children have settled down well and have been helped to do this by the kindness you show them. This letter will tell you what else we found out.

Your school is a good school. Teaching is good and leads to you making good progress by the time you leave Year 6. You enjoy learning, especially those lessons in which you are involved and in which you can learn for yourselves. We were pleased to see how often you are assessing your work and other pupils' work because it encourages you to think more carefully about how you can do even better. The standards that you reach by the end of Year 6 are not high enough, particularly in mathematics. Your headteacher, who works hard for you, and the staff, are going to check very carefully how they use assessments of your work to help you make faster progress. One way they can help this to happen is to make sure that your work is at just the right level so that you can make as much progress as possible.

One thing that makes your school special is that you all get on with each other. You come from different cultures and your school makes use of this in lessons to give you a good understanding of other heritages. You enjoy out-of-lesson clubs because they are fun and teach you new skills. Lessons have also helped you to understand why you should have a healthy lifestyle, including eating and drinking healthily. While we saw you are pleased with your computer suite, we agree with you that you should have more opportunities to use computers in other subjects.

We hope you will continue to work hard and get the most out of your school. Your Halloween disco was a good example of how you do this.

Lynne Blakelock

Lead inspector