

# Walsham-Le-Willows Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124717
<b>Local Authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	340635
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nick Butt

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	71
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr R Tuvey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs A Hunter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Wattisfield Road Walsham-le-Willows Suffolk
<b>Telephone number</b>	01359 259319
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<b>Email address</b>	headteacher.kjg@e2bn.net

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## **Introduction**

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning; evidence of monitoring, such as lesson observations and notes of governors' visits; pupils' work and other assessment information. Inspectors scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by 25 parents or carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- reasons why pupils appear to achieve better in writing than in mathematics
- the consistency of good teaching and impact of measures to improve it
- the impact of the federation on outcomes

## **Information about the school**

This is a smaller than average sized school. It has its Early Years Foundation Stage provision in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. Most pupils on roll are from White British backgrounds. Few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, and none speak English as an additional language. The school has some pupils from the Traveller community and includes looked after children. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. These are mainly for speech and language difficulties. It has gained the Healthy Schools and Active Mark awards and the eco-friendly Green Flag award.

The school has been federated with another local primary school since September 2008. The federation shares a headteacher but has two separate governing bodies. There is a pre-school on site that is run privately and is subject to a separate inspection report.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Walsham-Le-Willows Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary is a satisfactory school. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall, although progress tends to be better in reading and writing than in mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average in writing and average in reading and mathematics. Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 with attainment that meets national expectations for their age. The teaching is satisfactory with some good practice, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In the rest of the school, work is not always matched sufficiently well to meet the range of pupils' learning needs, especially in challenging more able pupils. Pupils make better progress in writing because they are given clear structures to help them to write in a range of styles, and make good use of technology to support their work. They have insufficient opportunities to use and apply their understanding in mathematics, and not all of them are confident in knowing their multiplication tables. In general, while there are some good examples of careful questioning helping pupils to develop their ideas, sometimes opportunities are missed to extend pupils' thinking through open-ended discussion. A new topic-based curriculum is proving popular with pupils, and providing some additional scope for them to write across a range of subjects. This is at an early stage of development.

The school provides a good level of care and support for all pupils, including those from the Traveller community. This enables these pupils to make similar progress to other pupils, even though they may be absent from school, travelling for extended periods of time. The school's caring ethos is valued by parents, one of whom said, 'It is a very happy and inspiring place for children to learn.' Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive valuable support from teaching assistants to enable them to make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets.

Pupils feel safe at school and are helpful and considerate towards one another. They behave well in classrooms and outside in the playground. Relationships are good throughout the school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthily, and make positive choices through taking plenty of exercise and choosing a healthy diet. Pupils are involved well in the life of the village, attending services at the church, and helping to pick up litter. They open up the school grounds in August for the general public to enjoy.

The headteacher has had a positive impact in ensuring all pupils are valued and make good progress in their personal development. Her commitments to the federation mean that she has not had the time to monitor the work of the school sufficiently rigorously and systematically, and this has led to self-evaluation that is too generous. In addition,

the focus of strategic planning is too narrow and not centred on key areas for improvement. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory. Pupils have been making satisfactory progress overall for some time, and attainment has been generally in line with national expectations. Governors are very committed to the school and give generously of their time, but the new chair has correctly identified that the monitoring documentation needs to be more rigorous and that governors need to ask more challenging questions of the school's staff.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise pupils' achievement and standards in mathematics by:
  - giving them more opportunities to use and apply their knowledge and understanding
  - consolidating their knowledge of multiplication tables
- Ensure teaching is consistently good by:
  - matching tasks precisely to pupils' different learning needs
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to explain their understanding and extend their thinking
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels by:
  - systematically and rigorously monitoring the work of the school
  - ensuring strategic plans accurately reflect the school's key priorities for improvement.
- About 40% of schools whose effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

<b>3</b>
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Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are keen to take an active part in lessons. Year 1 and Year 2 pupils enjoyed identifying two-dimensional shapes, describing their attributes and discussing their findings with a partner. Pupils enthusiastically decorated T-shirts they had brought in to send to children in India as part of a national appeal. Pupils also work well independently, as when Year 3 pupils were engaged in writing an adventure story, using a storyboard they had designed on the computer to assist them in planning it correctly.

Pupils tend to do better in writing than in mathematics because they have clear guidance about how to write their stories and are given practical examples to support them. In mathematics, pupils do not always have the opportunity to consider mathematical concepts at length or to use and apply their knowledge and understanding in a wide range of different contexts. Some pupils are unsure of their multiplication tables, and this hinders their progress. All groups of pupils make satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and looked after children. Pupils from the Traveller community are given work packs to take on their

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

travels with them, and this helps to ensure they do not fall behind in their progress. The school's achievement of the Healthy Schools and Active Mark awards testify to pupils' good awareness of how to live healthy lifestyles. This is enhanced by their awareness of, and commitment to, sustainable living, with composting and recycling and energy conservation managed by the eco council. Pupils also grow their own vegetables in the school grounds. Pupils walk to school from the village hall three times per week to reduce their carbon footprint. Year 4 pupils learn cycling proficiency to keep safe on the rural roads of Suffolk. Pupils made a striking banner to mark the 'Year of the Child', which first hung in the cathedral at Bury St Edmunds and now graces the interior of the parish church, reaching from the roof to the floor. Pupils have strong links with the village and were asked to name a new village play area. They are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of their education, leaving with attainment at nationally expected levels.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good sense of right and wrong and get on together well. They experience a good range of cultures and traditions through art, music and dance, including learning about Traveller culture.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

## How effective is the provision?

There are good relationships in classes and pupils behave well, creating a culture for learning to take place. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution through working with focus groups. Teaching is predominantly satisfactory, with not enough opportunity for pupils to develop their ideas or discuss at length what they are learning.

Opportunities to widen a discussion as a result of a particular contribution by pupils are sometimes missed. Teachers use new technology well to engage and interest pupils, and often ask pupils to talk in pairs about their ideas, which they do responsibly. Tasks are not always matched to suit the full range of pupils' abilities, resulting in more able pupils in particular not being sufficiently challenged. Target -setting has improved since the last inspection, and pupils now have individual targets they can understand and refer to in their books. Marking tells pupils how well they are doing but does not always show them how they can improve their work.

The curriculum has been developed very recently, based around topics. It ensures all skills are covered and National Curriculum requirements are met. This has enabled there to be more links across subjects, particularly including writing opportunities in other subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils wrote wind poems linked to their topic on weather. The school is making use of the internet to enable pupils to access the curriculum from home, and an interesting project with a neighbouring school is encouraging pupils to communicate with each other electronically. It is too early to see the full impact of the curriculum, which is the sole priority on the school's interim development plan, on standards and achievement. Enrichment is good, with a wide range of clubs, including wildlife and cheerleading. The cookery club uses healthy produce from the school's garden, as when pupils made pumpkin soup. There are a good variety of visits and visitors, with themed days such as Roald Dahl day and World War II day.

There is good care, guidance and support for pupils, which contributes well to their good behaviour and good progress in personal development and well being. The school is especially successful at meeting the needs of its most vulnerable pupils, looked after children and those from the Traveller community. All pupils are known as individuals and teachers provide good role models in showing them respect. A pupil said, 'It's a friendly school - all the teachers get on.'

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

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## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers are satisfactory at embedding ambition and driving improvement. The impact of the federation has been positive in enabling pupils to take part in combined activities, such as a residential visit and to make new friends. There have also been opportunities for staff to work together from the two partner schools. However, no additional provision was made when the federation was set up a year ago to boost leadership capacity, and this has resulted in the headteacher having a very heavy workload. Subject leaders report to governors about developments in their subjects, but these tend to lack focus on standards and achievement. The English and mathematics subject leaders monitor planning and work, but have few opportunities to visit lessons. Monitoring has not been given the priority it merits, and self-evaluation is not based sufficiently on systematic and rigorous evaluation of the quality of the school's provision. This has led to over-generous judgements that do not take enough into account the satisfactory teaching and learning and satisfactory progress that pupils make. A consequence of this has been that strategic plans do not focus on the key areas for improvement sufficiently well, and do not take a longer term view. Governors, while doing much voluntary work for the school, have not held leaders sufficiently to account nor recorded their business in ways that make clear how effective they are. Minutes of full governors' meetings lack important detail and insight, and notes of visits are intermittent and highly variable in their content. However, minutes of committee meetings provide a clearer account of what questions were raised by governors. The new chair has recognised these shortcomings, and put in place actions to help remedy them. On a more positive note, governors have been particularly effective in carrying out health and safety audits and in ensuring risk assessments meet requirements. Safeguarding procedures are effectively implemented.

The school has a good understanding of its local community, and works well with different groups, including the Traveller community. Promotion of community cohesion through national and global dimensions is less well developed, although there are plans to forge links with schools in contrasting areas. The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination satisfactorily, ensuring all groups are treated equally and make satisfactory progress.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>



<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly in the Reception class because the learning environment is attractive and stimulating and good provision is made for their care. There is a good mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities, with plenty of opportunity for children to select their own materials and make choices that promote their independence. Children enjoyed using a wide range of resources to make their own musical instruments, as part of their topic, selling them at the music shop outside. Children are caring towards one another. During one game they requested that a child who had been upset should go first. The teaching is consistently good, as adults have a good understanding of how young children learn. Exemplary practice is seen in the way children's views are taken into account when planning topics, so that the work is exciting and relevant for them. Thinking about the theme of 'fantasy', one child asked the question, 'Do dragons hurt princesses?' Children make good progress from a wide range of starting points and are generally working within the expected goals by the end of the Reception year.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well, with a strong team of adults working closely together. There are very strong links with the neighbouring pre-school, so that transition into the Reception class takes place smoothly. Effective assessment procedures ensure that children's progress is monitored carefully and recorded clearly. The outside area, while used regularly, is not as well resourced as inside, and lacks a canopy to enable children to work outside in all weathers.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Most parents strongly agree that their children enjoy school and feel safe. Fewer parents strongly agree that their views are taken into account and that behaviour is managed well, although there is widespread general agreement about all the questions.

Inspectors found that the school communicates effectively with parents, and that the management of behaviour is good. Most of the comments from parents were positive about their own children's experiences. Individuals requested more homework and more emphasis on reading books in Years 3 and 4.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Walsham-Le-Willows Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 71 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	76	6	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	60	10	40	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	8	32	17	68	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	44	14	56	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	48	13	52	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	36	15	60	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	36	13	52	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	8	32	14	56	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	36	15	60	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	24	17	68	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	24	17	68	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	44	13	52	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	76	6	24	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



16 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Walsham-Le-Willows Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Suffolk, IP31 3BD

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and talking to you in groups and in your classrooms. Your school gives you a satisfactory level of education. Here are some strong points:

You feel safe at school and behave well.

You know all about keeping healthy and take plenty of exercise.

You help one another in school and are actively involved in your local community.

You are caring and get on well together, having a good understanding of how other people live.

There are plenty of clubs and trips for you to enjoy.

The school cares for you well.

The youngest children make good progress in the Reception class.

You could do better in mathematics, so we have asked your teachers to give you lots of opportunities to use what you know in practical ways. You can help by making sure you know all your multiplication tables. We have asked your teachers to make sure the work set is not too easy or too difficult for you, and to give you time to think about what you are learning, so that you can tell them your ideas. We have asked leaders and governors to make sure they check carefully how well the school is doing, and to know exactly what they need to do to help the school improve further.

Thank you again for making us so welcome. Our very best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Nick Butt

Lead Inspector

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