

Walton Oak Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134557
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	341480
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Carole Skinner

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	467
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Gladman
Headteacher	Mandy Watts
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 18 lessons and 17 teachers were observed. Meetings were held with senior- and middle-leaders, three governors, representatives of the school council, a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6 and the school improvement partner. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's assessment records, its analysis of pupils' progress in each year group, samples of pupils' work, the school improvement plan, teachers' planning and the school's recent monitoring evidence. The inspection team scrutinised the responses that were received to the Ofsted questionnaire from 75 parents, 106 pupils and 39 members of staff.

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

- the impact of recent initiatives to raise attainment and accelerate learning and progress for all groups of pupils
- how successfully the school is improving the quality of teaching in order to ensure consistently good progress for all pupils
- the effectiveness of target-setting and tracking procedures in helping to eliminate underachievement
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in developing capacity for sustained improvement and overcoming the barriers to good progress.

Information about the school

Walton Oak is larger than the average primary school and draws most of its pupils from the surrounding area. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is higher than average, as is the percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils' needs range from severe to moderate learning difficulties and include speech, language and communication difficulties and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. The large majority of pupils are of White British or European heritage. A few pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English. Since the last inspection there have been two changes of headteacher. The current headteacher took up her post in September 2008. A new deputy headteacher, two assistant headteachers and an inclusion leader all took up their posts in September 2009. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is in an 80-place Nursery which offers morning and afternoon sessions and in two Reception classes. The school hosts privately run childcare provision at breakfast and after-school clubs. This provision was inspected separately.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' attainment, achievement and attendance.

Pupils' attainment in national tests has remained low for the past five years but is beginning to rise. The strategies initiated by the headteacher, founded on secure and accurate evaluation of the school's effectiveness, have led to marked improvements in many pupils' rates of progress over the past twelve months. For this reason, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory. However, progress over time is not consistent in all classes and year groups because of variations in teaching quality and is inadequate overall. There is still not enough consistently good teaching to eradicate the backlog of underachievement that has arisen from past weaknesses. In the lessons where pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress, teachers do not explain clearly enough what pupils are going to learn, or involve them sufficiently in checking their own progress. In some lessons, the pace of learning is too slow because the planned tasks do not match the needs and capabilities of different groups of pupils closely enough. This is because teachers do not always use assessment information with sufficient rigour when planning the next steps for each pupil. In the growing number of good lessons, pupils' needs are met well, lessons are brisk and enjoyable, and marking clearly shows pupils the next steps in learning.

The headteacher's resolute leadership and passionate commitment to providing the best possible education for every pupil have successfully established a positive climate for learning. Pupils are enthusiastically embracing the 'Walton Oak Way', showing care and consideration for others and celebrating differences. Their generally good behaviour contributes much to the school's calm and purposeful atmosphere. Effective safeguarding procedures and good care and support ensure that pupils feel very safe and well looked after. Enjoyment levels are rising in response to a more practical curriculum with increased opportunities for outdoor learning. Events such as 'International Week' greatly enhance pupils' enjoyment and understanding of different cultures.

The headteacher and governors have created a strong leadership team whose considerable expertise has yet to show its full impact as most have been in post for less than six months. They share the headteacher's vision and high aspirations for the school and are active in leading developments in their phase teams, but have not had sufficient time to drive and embed the necessary improvements in teaching and learning

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throughout the school.

Most parents and carers are happy with their children's experience at Walton Oak and with the way the school engages with them to support their children's learning. The school is constantly seeking ways to involve parents and carers in school life more effectively and parents and carers appreciate this. There are rigorous procedures for monitoring absence and good strategies, such as attendance awards, to encourage pupils to come to school regularly. Despite this, overall attendance is low. Persistent absence leads to significant underachievement for a very small but significant minority of pupils.

The provision for children in the Nursery and Reception is a strength of the school. Children get off to a good start, particularly in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills and in developing confidence and independence.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science so that it is at least in line with national expectations by July 2011 by:
 - eliminating the current inconsistencies in progress between classes and year groups in Years 1 to 6
 - embedding the recently introduced arrangements to involve teachers more fully in checking pupils' progress each half-term and taking prompt action to tackle early signs of underachievement.
- Improve attendance to satisfactory levels (94% or higher) and reduce the proportion of persistent absentees to at least national average levels by July 2011 by:
 - working very closely with the families of persistent absentees to ensure they appreciate the impact of poor attendance on their children's learning and progress
 - taking firm action, in liaison with external agencies, to deal with poor attendance
 - seeking further ways to encourage good attendance and develop pupils' enthusiasm for coming to school.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good by December 2010 by:
 - ensuring all teachers plan activities that promote a good pace of learning and build effectively on previous learning for all groups of pupils
 - identifying the specific learning that teachers intend to take place in each lesson and explaining this very clearly to pupils at the outset
 - involving pupils in checking how well they have understood new learning during and at the end of lessons
 - ensuring that pupils are given consistently high quality oral and written

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feedback that shows them the next steps in learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Learning in lessons is now at least satisfactory but progress and achievement over time remain inadequate. Improvements in teaching over the past 12 months have successfully accelerated learning in some parts of the school, but pockets of underachievement remain. Pupils make better progress in reading as a result of new initiatives, including a reading recovery programme. Progress in writing has accelerated but remains too slow and many pupils still have weak skills, particularly in spelling, sentence construction and punctuation. Progress in mathematics and science is speeding up following the increased focus on practical investigations and active learning, as was seen in a Year 5 lesson where pupils gained a good understanding of how matter changes state. Progress often slows in lessons where pupils spend too long listening to the teacher and too little time engaged in 'hands-on' learning. This was evident in some pupils' literacy books, which showed too few opportunities for them to write independently at length.

Records show that over the last three years some pupils with less severe special educational needs have made satisfactory progress, while those with more significant learning difficulties have not. More rigorous systems for identifying and meeting individual learning needs are beginning to accelerate progress for these pupils, especially in their ability to work independently rather than being over-reliant on adult support. Pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language generally make satisfactory progress.

Pupils are interested in, and curious about, the world around them and take part in all activities with enthusiasm. They get on well with others from different backgrounds and have a good awareness of right and wrong. Pupils take part with enthusiasm in physical activities provided by play leaders and sports professionals. They are appropriately involved in the local community, for example by participating in the winter festival of light. They recently took part in a project to enhance the local environment by creating a mural. Pupils collaborate on tasks well but their basic literacy and numeracy skills are not sufficiently well developed to equip them for future life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Concern for pupils' health, safety and well-being is a high priority at Walton Oak. Teachers and assistants work effectively together as a team to support and guide pupils and help them sort out any problems or difficulties. Behaviour has improved in response to consistently applied guidelines and expectations and a more engaging curriculum with a greater emphasis on active learning. Pupils' horizons are broadened through opportunities to learn German and Spanish and to take part in residential visits in Years 3, 5 and 6. The curriculum continues to evolve as teachers explore ways to link learning across different subjects and to maximise the school's excellent facilities for using new technologies to enhance learning. Although improving, the curriculum is not yet sufficiently fine-tuned to ensure that it promotes good progress for all groups of pupils in each year group. Despite recent improvements, there are still too few opportunities for pupils to write independently and at greater length in subjects such as science and history.

The school's evaluations of teaching broadly match those of the inspection team and show that approximately half of the teaching is now good. Records show that this represents a marked improvement over the previous year. Assessment is becoming more rigorous and consistent but the information it provides is not used consistently well to inform teachers' planning for different groups of pupils. Most teachers' marking is evaluative but does not always point clearly to the next steps in learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's ambitious vision for the school is shared by staff and governors and is reflected in the challenging targets that are set for the school and the pupils each year. The new leadership team has quickly established its role in monitoring the quality of provision and the outcomes for pupils in each phase of the school. Senior leaders analyse assessment data and meet with the staff in their key stage teams to discuss pupils' progress and identify those who need greater challenge or more support. This is a new initiative which has not been in place long enough to demonstrate its impact. Subject leaders are instrumental in driving new initiatives in their areas of curriculum, for example training staff in teaching a new phonics programme and increasing the emphasis on pupils using and applying their mathematical skills in everyday situations. These initiatives are all contributing to improvements in teaching and pupils' progress but have yet to ensure the dissemination of good practice throughout the school.

The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations and is particularly effective in ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare. There has been a high turnover of governors in recent years but they are now becoming increasingly effective in their role of providing both support and challenge to the school. The school monitors the performance of different groups of pupils and takes appropriate action to tackle inequalities, such as modifying the curriculum to make it more appealing to boys. The school is successful in promoting cohesion within its own community but has this not been extended sufficiently to consider national and global contexts.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Many children enter the Nursery with poor social, language and communication skills. They make good progress in both Nursery and Reception and reach broadly average levels of attainment by the time they move into Year 1. The Nursery focuses well on developing children's independence and confidence. Children settle quickly because of the excellent relationships they form with all of the staff. Children clearly feel safe and happy, are very well cared for and engage in the well-planned activities with energy and enthusiasm. Staff have a good understanding of the children's needs and how they learn, and quickly respond to their ideas and interests. The atmosphere is lively and the routines very well established.

Reception classes build on this good start to learning by extending children's knowledge of sounds, letters and numbers and developing their physical skills so that they are well equipped for learning to read and write. An exciting range of activities and resources ensures that all are enjoying learning and making good progress. On one occasion, children thoroughly enjoyed using their knowledge of numbers to play a game of bingo while others confidently measured different sized footprints, made by 'Jack and the Giant', with cubes. The outside area is not as vibrant and exciting as the classrooms and, although used well to develop learning on some occasions, is not made the most of to provide opportunities to promote all six areas of learning.

The Early Years Foundation leader, though only in post since September 2009, has quickly established appropriate priorities for improvement and is working closely with the other staff to ensure good quality provision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

Seventy five parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. This is a fairly low return. Most parents and carers expressed satisfaction with the school,

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although a few expressed concerns that the school was not meeting their children's needs well enough. Inspectors agree that this is an area for improvement. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views that pupils are kept safe and are well looked after. A few parents do not feel that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that behaviour is generally good and that the school tackles unacceptable behaviour firmly but fairly.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Walton Oak 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 75 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 467 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	55	29	39	4	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	42	56	30	40	2	3	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	26	35	42	56	5	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	36	38	51	7	9	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	31	41	38	51	4	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	36	42	56	5	7	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	31	42	56	2	3	4	5
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)	27	36	38	51	5	7	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	32	41	55	6	8	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	21	43	57	5	7	5	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	23	44	59	6	8	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	24	32	37	49	7	9	5	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	35	37	49	9	10	2	3

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



28 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Walton Oak Primary School, Walton-on-Thames KT12 3LN

I am writing to let you know what the inspectors found when we visited your school and to thank you for helping us. We enjoyed meeting you, visiting your lessons and looking at your work. We were impressed by your good behaviour in lessons and at playtimes and were pleased to hear that you feel very safe in school and that most of you really enjoy being there. Your school has been through some big changes over the past three years ' moving into a super new building, three different headteachers and lots of new staff. The school leaders know exactly what needs to be done to make Walton Oak a good school. They have already introduced some new ways of teaching to help you make better progress. These new ideas have not been working long enough yet to make a real difference to how well you achieve over your time in school, although many of you are now making faster progress than you were a year ago.

We have asked your school to make significant improvements in three main areas: your attainment (the levels you reach) and progress (how fast you reach them) and your attendance. At the moment many of you are not reaching high enough levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science because you do not make enough progress from year to year. You now make satisfactory progress in lessons, which is good to see. We have asked your teachers to help you make faster progress so that you can make up some of the gaps in your learning. You can all help by taking notice of the advice they give you on how to improve and using it in your work.

Too many of you do not come to school regularly enough. We have asked the school to help you and your families so that you attend as often as you can, only taking time off if you are really ill. This is really important because if you miss school you fall behind in your learning.

We thoroughly enjoyed our visits to the Nursery and Reception. We could see that you get off to a good start in these classes as you learn through lots of exciting play activities. If you all work really hard in the rest of the school you can help your teachers to make sure that this good progress continues in every year group.

Above all, carry on enjoying your time at Walton Oak and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Carole Skinner

Lead inspector

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