

Waltham on the Wolds Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120170
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	339619
Inspection dates	14–15 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Keith Williams

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Diane Yates
Headteacher	Mrs Cora Townson
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2006
School address	Waltham on the Wolds CofE Primary Melton Road Waltham on the Wolds LE14 4AJ
Telephone number	01664464269
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Registered childcare provision	Waltham Pre-school
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	29
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	17 October 2006

Age group	4-11
Inspection date(s)	14–15 January 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The majority of time was spent observing learning, including visits to twelve lessons. Five teachers were seen, together with staff at the pre-school and after-school groups. Meetings were held with staff, pupils and two governors. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's development plan, safeguarding documents and those relating to their health, safety and attendance, and 41 questionnaires returned by parents.

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

- the school's evidence to support its view that pupils attain above average standards and make good progress
- how well pupils respond to the school's potentially strong promotion of their personal development
- how well teachers meet the needs of pupils of different abilities in mixed-age classes
- the extent to which monitoring arrangements have improved since the last inspection.

Information about the school

Almost all of the pupils at this very small school are from White British backgrounds and none is learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, but varies from year to year, and an above-average proportion is in receipt of a statement of special educational need. A well-below-average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The school hosts the Waltham pre-school group and an after-school club, both of which are managed by governors. The pre-school has children between the ages of two and four; the after-school club has children between three and thirteen. Many of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage attend the pre-school before joining the Reception year, where they are taught in a class alongside pupils from Year 1. Amongst its national awards, the school has Healthy School and Investors in People status. As part of local reorganisation, the school took Year 6 pupils for the first time in 2008-9. Some year groups have high mobility, with a higher than usual proportion of pupils joining or leaving.

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?**2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

Waltham on the Wolds Church of England Primary School provides a good education for its pupils. Pupils achieve well because key aspects of the school's provision have improved since the last inspection. Teaching is now consistently good; staff keep a closer check on pupils' progress and ensure that pupils of all abilities are challenged. A considerable strength is the positive, supportive ethos in which pupils receive high quality care, guidance and support. The school is highly inclusive; staff know each pupil well and monitor their welfare closely. Pupils appreciate this, and report that they feel very safe in school and well cared for. This is supported by most parents, one of whom reports, 'The school has a lovely family atmosphere and mixes all age groups and pre-school siblings extremely well. The staff are friendly and caring and have been very welcoming to us and our wider family.' Behaviour is consistently excellent, which underpins the school's ethos.

When pupils start school, they arrive with widely differing needs and skills, including some who have significant special educational needs. This varies considerably from year to year, however, as does the proportion in each year group who are capable of reaching the higher levels. This means that the make-up of each cohort, and their levels of attainment, vary considerably. Improved systems for tracking pupils' progress are building up a clear picture of each pupil's starting points, attainment and progress. This data, together with pupils' work in books and lessons, show that pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to reach above average standards. This is much higher than the results achieved in 2009, when more than half of the year group had special educational needs and/or disabilities. Across the school most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making good progress.

Teachers rise to the challenge of providing for mixed-age classes. They make good use of the assessment information they gather to match the work they plan to pupils' differing needs. They ensure that pupils understand what they are expected to learn in lessons and how their success will be judged – an improvement since the last inspection – and provide clear written and verbal feedback about their efforts. This contributes to pupils' good progress. Pupils, in turn, are very thoughtful and conscientious about their work, but there are too few opportunities for them to assess their own learning and respond to the comments made by teachers. Pupils' enjoyment of school is enhanced by a rich and interesting curriculum, which places a strong and successful emphasis on promoting pupils' personal development. Consequently, pupils have a sophisticated understanding for their age of how to lead

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safe and healthy lives and they endeavour to follow those principles.

The headteacher leads the school well and has worked successfully with staff and governors to improve systems for monitoring the school's effectiveness. Together, they have a good understanding of what is working well and what needs to improve. Their success in raising standards, accelerating pupils' progress and improving provision shows that they are well placed to continue to improve. The school functions as a harmonious community and pupils are actively involved in village life. Links are being established with organisations further afield but this, and the evaluation of the impact of their work on community cohesion, is at an early stage.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' involvement in evaluating their own work and responding to teachers' marking.
- Improve community cohesion by:
 - formalising the evaluation of the school's impact on promoting community cohesion
 - extending links beyond the local community.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Small numbers mean that analysis of national test results must be treated cautiously, because the performance of individual pupils can have an exaggerated effect on the results. The scores for Year 2 pupils fell in 2007, but have improved steadily to broadly average levels. The school took part in the national tests for Year 6 pupils for the first time in 2009, so it is not possible to make comparisons over time. There was a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in this cohort and no pupil reached the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics or science. Cohorts vary from year to year, however, and pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to improve on those results, with a good proportion working at the higher level. The school's work to raise writing standards has borne fruit. Amongst the many examples of good quality writing seen in lessons and books are the evocative poems written by Year 6 pupils as part of their study of the Second World War. Year 2 and 3 pupils are developing a good understanding of rhyme and rhythm as they explore the structure of their poems. Pupils good progress in the basic skills and above average attendance levels mean they are well prepared for their future economic well-being.

Pupils enjoy school. They achieve well due, in no small part, to consistently good teaching and pupils' positive attitudes. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported, so that they make good progress in their personal and academic development. Teachers' high expectations mean that more-able pupils have an appropriate level of challenge and they, too, achieve well. There is no significant difference in the progress made by boys and girls.

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Pupils respond well to the school’s strong promotion of their personal development. They make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, responding thoughtfully, for example, when asked, ‘What is peace?’ in an assembly. Pupils have a very clear understanding of right and wrong, and this contributes to their excellent behaviour. A very small number of pupils present occasionally challenging behaviour, but this is invariably well managed by staff, with no loss of pace to the lesson. All pupils are actively involved in supporting the smooth running of the school through its ‘wise owl parliament’. Pupils make a strong contribution to the local community by taking part regularly in events.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are successful because they are calm, supportive and well organised and most pupils are keen to learn. Relationships amongst pupils and with the adults are very positive. Teachers present the work in interesting ways, often using the interactive whiteboards to aid their explanations, reinforce the learning and capture attention. Across the school, teachers promote speaking and listening well, pose challenging questions and use pupils’ responses to monitor their understanding. In the pre-school, staff take every opportunity to encourage children to engage in conversation as, for example, when they observed ice melting in water. Teachers mark pupils’ work thoroughly and provide pointers for improvement, but there are few examples of pupils responding explicitly to teachers’ comments or assessing their own work.

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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The school has made great strides in improving its curriculum in recent years. This is appreciated by pupils, many of whom enjoy the emphasis on practical activity. Literacy and numeracy are strengths and this contributes to the above average standards. The school is rightly proud of its musical tradition. It is strongly represented at local performances and those further afield, and all pupils learn to play the recorder, which they do with admirable quality. The curriculum is well planned to take account of the mixed-age classes and there are good links between subjects that make the work meaningful. For example, a Year 6 pupil spoke very knowledgeably about the Ancient Egyptian system of calculating fractions and how it differed from standard processes. Across the school, there are good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and computer skills. Extra-curricular and enrichment activities are very good and contribute to pupils' enjoyment.

Central to the school's success is the high quality of care and support afforded to pupils. The school takes good advantage of its small size, because pupils are well known and staff ensure that they get the help they need. Teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is very strong. In Class 1, for example, the nursery nurse contributes considerably to the provision for Reception children. Across the school, teaching assistants play a key role in the very good support given to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Very strong links with outside agencies underpin this process, particularly for those pupils with significant medical needs. The school 'goes the extra mile' and makes a real difference. A close check is kept on those pupils who are potentially vulnerable. There are excellent arrangements for ensuring the smooth transfer of pupils into or out of the school. Links between pre-school and Reception are good. One parent was moved to write, 'The school provided an excellent induction process/period for my child starting into Reception...It is a lovely, personal school with many great qualities and teachers.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, staff and governors share a common sense of purpose. There is a strong emphasis on teamwork and a focus on ensuring equality of opportunity, raising standards and accelerating pupils' progress. Improvements to monitoring and the tracking of pupils' academic progress have contributed to the school's improvement. Self-evaluation systems are good, so there is a clear understanding of what is working well and what can improve. Through their 'monitoring of standards' committee, governors have good links with classes and subjects, and this helps them

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to hold the school to account. The headteacher monitors the quality of lessons thoroughly. Staff are widely involved in leading developments in their subjects, supporting colleagues and checking on pupils’ books and teachers’ planning. There is scope to put their observation of lessons on a more systematic footing.

The school has good relationships with parents, most of whom agree that their views are taken into account. Links with local schools are also strong and are used well to support the professional development of staff. The school is very active in its local community and makes a strong contribution to it by, for example, providing the very popular and highly regarded pre-school group and after-school club. Specialist agencies contribute well to pupils’ all-round development. Steps to check on the suitability of adults to work with children are comprehensive and robust. The school has a good understanding of how it contributes to local community cohesion, although its monitoring of impact is largely informal. Further afield, impact is at an early stage: contacts with contrasting schools are being established and there are exciting plans to develop links with a school in South America.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The pre-school group provides very well for its children, including those who are under three. The setting’s own consultation with parents shows a high level of satisfaction with what is provided. Space in the setting is tight, but this does not have an adverse impact on children’s learning and welfare because pre-school is very well organised, led and managed. Children learn well because they are well taught and all staff contribute to the assessment of their progress. Children engage happily in the exciting activities, making a tower ‘as high as the ceiling’, and readily converse with staff and visitors.

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Planning ensures that there is comprehensive coverage of all of the areas of learning. There is a strong emphasis on promoting independence and social development. Snack-time, for example, is an enjoyable social occasion where good manners are reinforced in a very supportive environment. Children make good progress in Reception. Although each group varies from year to year, most children join Class 1 with the skills expected of this age. By the time they leave Reception, most have reached, and many have exceeded, the goals expected of them. Teaching and the curriculum are good. There is a careful balance between the children being taught as a discrete group and opportunities for them to join with Year 1. This works well. Similarly, there are good opportunities for children to make choices and decisions. Reception children have access to a well resourced outdoor area, although there is no all-weather cover. Nevertheless, plans are well in hand to provide a cover that will increase the availability of the facilities. Provision for children in Reception is well led and managed. Welfare requirements are met in the pre-school group, Reception class and after-school club.

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

Most of the parents who responded to the questionnaire are pleased with their child’s experience in school and say that their children enjoy school, are kept safe and able to lead healthy lifestyles, and are well prepared for their future education. Inspectors agree. A very small minority indicated that they would like more information about their children’s progress and more guidance on helping their children at home. Inspectors found that the information provided for parents and the guidance they are given are typical of schools of this type. A similarly small minority feel that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that most pupils behave impeccably. While a few pupils present challenging behaviour, this is managed well by staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Waltham On the Wolds Church of England 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 41 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 79 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	51	17	41	2	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	49	20	49	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	32	21	51	6	15	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	22	24	59	4	10	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	14	34	22	54	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	29	21	51	4	10	2	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	46	19	46	1	2	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)	19	46	15	37	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	39	20	49	1	2	2	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	32	22	54	4	10	2	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	39	19	46	4	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	39	19	46	4	10	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	49	17	41	2	5	1	2

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 all 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 pupils' 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.



16 January 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Waltham on the Wolds Church of England Primary School,
Waltham on the Wolds, LE14 4AJ**

Thank you for being so friendly when we visited your school. A special thank you goes to those who met with us to give us your views and talk about your work. You gave us lots of helpful information. I am writing to tell you what we found out.

Many of you and your parents told us that you go to a good school and we agree. You are making good progress. Your teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and to give you the right amount of challenge. They take excellent care of you, help you to feel very safe and keep a close check on how well you are learning. You do your bit by enjoying school, working hard and behaving exceptionally well. You have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lives. Well done and please keep it up!

Even though your school is good, your headteacher and the other adults want it to get even better. We have asked them to do two things:

- Your teachers give you lots of tips on how to improve your work. We want them to give you more chance to assess your own work and act on the comments that teachers write in your books.
- The school teaches you about your local community and you are very involved in it. We want your staff to check carefully that they also help you to understand how different communities get along in Britain and around the world.

We know you will want to help them by continuing to work hard, behave beautifully and enjoy school. We wish you good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Williams
Lead inspector

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