

Walsgrave Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103700
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	286728
Inspection date	30 January 2007
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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 on roll	
School	345
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lois Whitehouse
Headteacher	Kim Docking
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2002
School address	School House Lane Coventry CV2 2BA
Telephone number	024 76612161
Fax number	024 76602741

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Walsgrave Church of England Primary School is larger than most other primary schools. Many pupils live fairly close to the school but parents from further afield choose the school for its Christian tradition. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, though a few are from minority ethnic families. Nearly all pupils are fluent users of English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Whilst the local area is reasonably affluent, a few families experience considerable hardship. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The headteacher joined the school in January 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Walsgrave Church of England Primary is a good school. It has made great strides forward during the time of the current headteacher, and has regained its former overall effectiveness. Leadership and management are good. School leaders and governors fully uphold their mission to be continually improving. There is a keen sense of direction that is shared by all the adults in school. Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's many strengths and few areas for improvement. The pupils are keen self-improvers as well.

Standards are above average and achievement is good. Until last year, achievement had been satisfactory, but improvements to teaching, the curriculum and management systems have all had a beneficial effect on pupils' progress. Children in Nursery and Reception are enthusiastic learners and make good progress from their slightly above average starting points. Teaching is good throughout the school, with some successful strategies to ensure the weaker year groups achieve as effectively as the years with higher proportions of able pupils. School leaders are not complacent and are resolved to improve the quality of teaching further. At present, there are inconsistent opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and identify ways to improve it.

The curriculum is good. Pupils are very appreciative of the good range of out-of-school activities that are provided for them. There is sharp focus on basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), which enables pupils to prepare well for the next stage of education and life outside school. Some work to develop writing relies on repeated practice of punctuation, grammar and spelling rather than improving such skills through expressive writing in subjects outside English. The school's priority to create a curriculum focused on carefully planned themes is the opportunity to ensure that basic skills such as writing are practised in many subjects.

Pupils are wholehearted ambassadors for the school. They support each other well and are proud of their own and other pupils' achievements. Behaviour is outstanding. The school is successful in ensuring that pupils' personal development is as good as their academic achievement. Care, guidance and support are good. The Christian ethos pervades all aspects of life in school and all pupils are safeguarded very carefully. Pupils who are vulnerable to pressures outside school are counselled wisely to enable them to achieve well. Teaching assistants, lunchtime supervisors and the site and administration staff all play a helpful role in the effective nurturing of pupils' talents and needs.

There has been good improvement to the quality of education and pupils' achievement in the last two years. Because leadership and management are good, the priorities for future improvement are well chosen. The school is well placed to continue its rise and to benefit from its extremely effective partnerships with parents and the many other agencies that support its work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils have sufficient and regular opportunities to respond to guidance given by staff about their next steps in learning.
- Develop a curriculum built upon carefully planned themes that include activities for pupils to improve their writing skills in all subjects

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most children start school with a relatively good level of skills and knowledge, although a few do not have this advantage. All of them settle quickly into school and are happy to take part in the good mix of teacher-led and independent activities. Progress is good in Nursery and Reception and by the time they join Year 1, most children have achieved their learning targets.

Achievement continues at a good rate in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are well motivated towards their work and eagerly complete their tasks. All ability groups achieve successfully and at the end of Year 2, standards are above average.

There has been effective improvement in achievement in Years 3 to 6 so that it is now good. The school has tackled positively the former issues concerning the achievement of boys, the more able, and pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. All these groups achieve well. There has also been good impact of work to help pupils in Year 5, many of whom have personal circumstances that mean that steady learning is a challenge. Pupils in Year 5 are given effective support to help them concentrate and make good gains in their learning. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve well and some reach high standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils talk confidently of the many good things in school and have no hesitation in saying that 'Walsgrave is a great place to be'. Their ideas and opinions are clearly taken very seriously by school leaders and the list of innovations that were suggested by the pupils is much longer than in most schools. Attendance is above average, which reflects pupils' exceptionally positive views of the school. There are not yet sufficient opportunities for pupils to discuss how well they are learning or to respond to pointers for improvement given by teachers when work is marked.

Pupils have good understanding of the need to follow a safe and healthy lifestyle. Recent visits by a number of nurses have raised the awareness of issues of health and safety amongst Reception children. One girl said that the nurse's 'magic gloves' were vital to ensure cleanliness when patients are treated.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well. There are strong links with other schools and different faiths that ensure pupils' appreciation of the wealth of other cultures is good. The strong but unpretentious Christian background to the school assists the good growth of pupils' spiritual awareness. Pupils have a profound view of moral principles, which ensures their behaviour is outstanding and fosters a strong sense of racial harmony.

The good personal, social and emotional development of children in Nursery and Reception is a strong plank in their progress as happy, contented children who work hard. Pupils have a marked sense of their own and the wider communities. They are proud of other pupils' achievements and support each other well. They also support a good range of charities and give concerts and presentations to parents, neighbours and friends.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Across the school, the pupils benefit from well-planned lessons which are organised successfully to ensure pupils in each ability group are provided with challenging work. Teachers have good expectations and set clear boundaries for progress and behaviour which pupils cheerfully observe. Learning is fun and benefits from the good use made of interactive whiteboards. Children in Reception and Nursery work well because teachers are alert to their needs and provide stimulating learning activities. Teaching assistants give valuable support to their pupils and have a key role in assessing the progress made by individuals.

Work is marked conscientiously with useful indication of what requires improvement. In some classes, for example in Year 6, pupils have good opportunities to manage their own progress towards their targets by evaluating how effectively they have learned. In other classes, this is not as common, although in all years, pupils' targets are displayed prominently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school improvement plan includes a key priority to develop a 'thematic curriculum'. This is tied to the essential priority of raising achievement still further, especially in writing where some of the work is overly focused on exercises to improve spelling, grammar and punctuation.

There is awareness amongst school leaders that the same outcomes can be achieved by using subjects outside English, as a means to promote good skills of expressive writing and to practise the essential basic skills of writing.

In all other respects, the curriculum is good. There is a richness and variety in provision for the arts and music, and ICT skills are developed capably. The curriculum for children in Nursery and Reception is well balanced to cover all six learning goals. The enrichment of the curriculum through the programme of out-of-school activities, visits and visitors to school makes a good contribution to pupils' academic and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All adults working in school have been vetted for their suitability to work with children. The school has robust procedures for child protection. The commitment to good care, guidance and support is strong and pupils benefit from the involvement of all staff in their welfare. The school is a caring, Christian community, which parents value because it enables their children to do well.

Academic guidance is based on good procedures to assess and evaluate each pupils' progress. As noted above, there are not always enough opportunities for pupils to share their thoughts about their own progress. There are good systems in place for the sharing of clearly written targets for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. These pupils strive hard to meet their goals.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The drive for improvement is an outstanding feature of leadership and management. All the adults in school are signed up to this direction. It is evident also that the pupils want to do well and are keen to improve. Parents welcome the focus on an ever-improving school. The headteacher is the fount of this drive and sets high expectations of her staff and pupils.

Governors and senior leaders have a well-defined involvement in school self-evaluation. Governors provide the necessary checks and ask demanding questions to ensure the school is successful. There are rigorous means of checking and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and thorough systems to track pupils' achievement. Whilst these procedures work well, the school has a clearly stated and appropriate priority to widen the role of curriculum coordinators in the monitoring and evaluation of school performance.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

What a good day I had when I visited you recently! You made me very welcome and I thought you were all polite and extremely well behaved. I have written about this in my report, which some of you might like to read. If you do, you will see that I have pointed out a lot of good things. The main ones are:

- You go to a good school that is constantly trying to improve.
- You make good progress and reach above average standards.
- You get on well with each other, enjoy being in school and work hard.
- You have lots of good ideas to make the school an even better place.
- You are taught well and your learning is interesting and fun.
- All the adults in school take good care of you and help you to do well.
- Your headteacher expects you and the staff to be successful.
- Your parents are pleased with the education you receive

I have also written about two things which can be improved:

- You could have more opportunities to share your thoughts about how well you are learning.
- Some of your spelling, grammar and punctuation could be practised when you are writing about subjects outside English

I know you will want to help your teachers make these improvements. You can start by talking to them about the things they write when they mark your work.

I hope that you all do well in school and enjoy the good things provided for you.