

Walton on Trent CE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112861
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325704
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Ian Nelson

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Simon Westwood
Headteacher	Mrs Carolyn White
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 June 2006
School address	Coton Road Walton on Trent Swadlincote Derbyshire DE12 8NL
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited seven lessons or parts of lessons, and held meetings with staff and pupils. He spoke with the chair of governors by telephone and talked with parents. He observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, the records of pupils' progress, policies and procedures on safeguarding, pupils' work and 24 parental questionnaires representing 37 pupils.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of pupils throughout the school to see how current performance compares with national data
- whether the 2008 improvement in mathematics has been sustained
- what the school does to promote community cohesion
- the accuracy of school self-evaluation and its impact on school improvement planning
- the management of the school budget.

Information about the school

This small school serves the village of Walton on Trent and surrounding areas. Few pupils are eligible for a free school meal. The school has a below average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. None speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as needing extra help with their learning is a little below average. The proportion with a statement of their special educational needs is similar to the average. Children's attainment on entry varies from year to year but is generally around the expected level. The turnover of teachers over recent years is high due to staff moving to gain experience in different schools. The proportion of children who join the school other than at Reception is well above average. The school accommodates the Early Years Foundation Stage in a separate Reception class.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a school where staff and governors have an accurate understanding of how well it is doing, a clear commitment to meeting the needs of individuals and a good capacity for further improvement. A parent wrote on the inspection questionnaire, 'I have seen the school go from strength to strength' and the inspector agrees. Partnership with parents is a strength. They comment that 'staff are willing to listen to parents' and are 'very supportive and understanding'. They feel 'very actively involved' in the life of the school. Another significant strength is the exceptional quality of care for individuals and the way staff 'encourage pupils to become actively involved in school life'. The result is that 'Walton is a happy school' where pupils make good gains in their learning and outstanding progress in their personal development. Pupils are thoroughly involved in the life of the local community though the school recognises that it has not given them enough opportunities to experience the diversity of cultures that make up society as a whole.

Standards by Year 6 are broadly average, as they have been in recent years. Pupils make good progress while at the school, but an above average proportion join or leave part way through their primary years. Lesson observations during the inspection showed that most pupils make consistently good gains in their learning, confirming the analysis of the school's own assessment records. The good progress pupils make is the result of good teaching and excellent care, guidance and support. This quality provision stems from the ambitious shared vision of the staff and governors. Although there has been some turnover of teachers in recent times, the school has managed to remain successful because of the highly effective leadership and management of the headteacher. She has galvanised the whole staff into a cohesive team with a shared commitment to move the school to the next level by raising standards to consistently above average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards to above average by the end of Year 6 by ensuring that the majority of pupils who go all the way through Key Stage 2 consistently make at least 13 National Curriculum points progress and that those who join part way through the key stage make similarly proportionate gains.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to have first hand experience of culturally

diverse communities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons. Their exceptionally positive attitudes mean that their learning and progress are good and they achieve well from their varied starting points. Levels of attention and concentration are very high so that no time is wasted in lessons. Pupils show an exceptionally good capacity for working together and supporting each other on independent tasks so that adults can concentrate on supporting targeted groups. The school's records of pupils' progress between the tests they take in Year 2 and Year 6 show that most of those who go all through the school make good progress. Observations of lessons and of pupils' work during the inspection confirm this good work. The key for the school now is to accelerate progress further to raise standards to consistently above average. The school has sustained the recent improvement in mathematics. No significant difference exists between the learning and progress of different groups in school. Those who need extra help with their learning also make good progress.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their high attendance levels and exceptionally good behaviour shows their enjoyment of school. Pupils say no bullying takes place and are confident that if it did occur staff would deal with it. They have an exceptional awareness of how to stay safe and healthy and speak enthusiastically of their responsibilities, including being on the school council or the ECO committee. They are justifiably proud of their work on the community information boards around the school grounds and of their work with the parish council on the parish plan. Pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is outstanding. Their cultural development is good. While they enjoy learning about a range of religions and cultures, they have too few opportunities for first hand experience of culturally diverse communities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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

What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2
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How effective is the provision?

Teachers' secure knowledge of their subjects and of their pupils' needs help to ensure that progress is good for all groups of learners. Excellent relationships build on pupil's natural enthusiasm for learning so that lessons are well paced. Teachers set work that matches the different abilities in their class which challenges all pupils suitably. Occasionally teachers miss opportunities to let the most able start their tasks without sitting through the opening whole class session first. Highly effective assessment systems mean that staff know precisely how well their pupils are doing and what they need to learn next, although some of the recording of that information is too complex. The school acknowledges that it could be usefully simplified with more reference to National Curriculum points gained over a key stage.

The school provides a good range of activities to help pupils to learn within the classroom and beyond. The focus is strong on acquiring basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology balanced with other subjects. Particularly good provision for personal, social and health education results in outstanding personal development for pupils. The staff are currently looking at ways to broaden pupils' experiences of the diversity of cultures beyond the immediate locality.

Parents and pupils are unanimous in their view that the staff provide excellent care, guidance and support. Pupils listed the teachers as the main strength of the school because they not only make learning interesting, but they also look after them exceedingly well. The school has particularly effective links with other schools and agencies to ease transition between primary and secondary school and to provide for the needs of individual pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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 key to the school's ongoing success is the way all staff share the same ambitious drive towards continuous school improvement. This drive is fuelled by a determination to ensure that pupils have equal opportunities to succeed whatever their background, ability or particular needs. There is an expectation that everyone will respect the views and backgrounds of others however different they may be. The result is a happy and harmonious school where, as one parent wrote `the

atmosphere is both caring and educational'. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are excellent. They confirm that they feel exceptionally well cared for at the school. The school is at the heart of the village community and pupils feel thoroughly involved in local issues that help to promote community cohesion. The school recognises the need to broaden pupil's horizons beyond their immediate locality.

Recent staff changes mean that some subject leaders are new to their posts. They have embraced the challenge of their roles with great enthusiasm. They have very quickly gained an accurate picture of the strengths and areas of development within their subjects. Governors have a clear understanding of how well the school is doing and realise that they need to share their expertise to give greater flexibility to their committee structure. They are very aware of the potential budget difficulties given future financial projections and looking at ways to resolve them. An accurate assessment of the school's performance is the basis for improvement plan, although it is overly ambitious in the number of its priorities.

The school has managed effectively a period of change since the last inspection. Induction of new teachers is quick and effective. The current cohesive staff team provides a common vision for the future. Teaching assistants play a major role in the school's continuing success, a factor recognised and appreciated by senior leaders. The underlying factor behind the school's continued success has been the leadership of the headteacher, who has ensured that changes and developments at the school have consistently benefited the pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage have improved since the last inspection. The school has successfully addressed the issue for improvement and now provides an exciting and stimulating outdoor area for children. Staff make exceptionally good use of the indoor and outdoor accommodation to extend children's learning. Teaching is outstanding with an excellent balance between activities that children choose for themselves and those directed by adults. The

exceptional partnership between the teacher and the teaching assistant means that all children receive help to do their best. As a result, they settle quickly into school routines and become confident in choosing and managing their own learning activities. Staff constantly record children’s gains in learning and identify where individuals need more challenge or support. Children currently in the Early Years Foundation Stage have made exceptional progress in their learning and nearly all have met or exceeded the goals expected of their age.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents express overwhelmingly positive views of the school. One parent expressed concern that there was too much emphasis on Christianity and that other faiths should be taught. The inspection found plenty of evidence that the school does teach pupils about a range of faiths, including several displays around the school. Several parents wrote glowing comments on the questionnaires about how well the school cares for their children and helps them to settle in to school. Parents also commented on how well the staff get to know all the pupils as individuals and help them to make good progress.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils at Walton on Trent CE School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspector received 24 completed questionnaires representing 31 pupils. In total, there are 53 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	28	3	0	0

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. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
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. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment:** the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- 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.
- Achievement:** the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
- 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.



25 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Walton on Trent CE School, Swadlincote, DE12 8NL

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school a few weeks ago. My particular thanks go to those who looked after me at lunchtimes and to the school council for taking time to talk with me. This letter is to tell you what I found out about your school.

Yours is a good school. One of the best things is the way you behave and look after each other and visitors. Your manners are impeccable. You work hard in lessons and always listen to what the adults tell you. This helps you to make good progress in your learning. You told me that teachers make lessons interesting and that is what I saw in the classrooms and outside. You have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. You thoroughly enjoy the jobs you have around the school. The school council and the ECO committee make a real impact. You make excellent use of your lovely grounds and I was impressed by the way you had produced information boards so that people could learn about the plants that grow there.

While you make good progress in your learning, I have asked the teachers to help you to learn even faster so that standards by Year 6 get to above average in the future. I have also asked the teachers to give you more chances to meet people from different backgrounds and cultures. You can help the school to get even better by continuing to behave as well and work as hard as you do now.

Yours faithfully

Ian Nelson
Lead inspector

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