

Little Waltham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115175
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338528
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Nasim Butt

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

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	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Pope
Headteacher	Elizabeth Maycock
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed 11 lessons taught by 7 teachers. Meetings were held with staff, governors and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised the school's development plan, tracking data, pupils' work, governing body minutes and school policies. They also analysed questionnaires completed by 92 parents and carers, 18 staff and 81 pupils.

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

- how effective leaders at all levels are in raising attainment in English and mathematics
- how well teachers enable more able pupils to learn effectively and make the best possible progress
- the extent to which outcomes for children support the school's assertion that the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good
- the extent to which community cohesion and pupils' spiritual development are a strength of the school.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average school serving a small village and the surrounding area to the North of Chelmsford. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and very few are from a minority ethnic background or speak English as an additional language. The pupils are taught in five mixed-age classes, with most children in Reception starting in January. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. The school is part of the River Chelmer cluster, a partnership comprising of one local secondary school and nine primaries. The current headteacher assumed the post in September 2008.

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

Little Waltham provides a satisfactory standard of education. Several aspects of its work are good. Strong relationships between adults and pupils are evident in lessons and around the school. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure. This view is also supported by the vast majority of parents. The behaviour of almost all pupils is consistently good and they get lots of opportunities to reflect by attributing meaning to everyday experience. However, their progress is no more than satisfactory because there is not enough good teaching to accelerate learning, as seen during the inspection. When children enter Reception their skills, especially in language and communication, are as expected for children of that age. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average in mathematics and English and slightly above average in science. Progress in mathematics was satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and inadequate in Key Stage 2 in 2009. As a result of accurate diagnosis and appropriate interventions this decline in Key Stage 2 has been halted. Progress in mathematics and English as observed by inspectors was sound and pupils in Year 6 are on track to reach national averages. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in reading because of the intensive support and attention they receive, supported by good tracking.

Parents and pupils value the caring ethos of their school. As one parent commented, 'I feel privileged that my children have grown up in this school.' During the inspection, a social and emotional skills session with a small group of Year 6 pupils (the 'rainbow group') was facilitated well by the teacher. As a result, pupils thought deeply about what acceptance and rejection means in the context of group situations.

Although several aspects of teaching are good, too much is only satisfactory. This is mainly because teachers do not consistently use assessment information to match tasks closely enough to the learning needs of pupils, especially the more able in the mixed-age classes. In addition, pupils are not always given the guidance they need to improve their work. Written feedback is not sufficiently well linked to individual learning targets and is therefore not precise enough to accelerate progress. As a consequence, though pupils' personal development is good, their academic progress is slower.

Community cohesion and effective partnerships are strong aspects of the school's work. For example, the River Chelmer cluster partnership has resulted in better support for subject leaders to develop more effective assessment systems. During the year, the school organises several events to entertain and support senior citizens in the village. The headteacher and her deputy have established a strong sense of common purpose amongst staff, with raising pupils' achievement at its core. They have accurately

identified the strengths and weaknesses in the school and implemented several initiatives for improvement. Subject coordinators are well motivated and developing their skills of monitoring and evaluation. However, lesson observations do not currently make secure judgements on the quality of pupils' learning and progress, so the impact of improvements to teaching is not fully evaluated. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is therefore satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that the large majority is good or better by:
 - ensuring all teachers use assessment more effectively to plan lessons that provide appropriate challenge to different ability groups, in particular the more able
 - providing pupils with consistently good quality written and oral feedback, linked to learning targets, to support them in making further improvements
 - consistently sharing with pupils what they need to do to make good progress in the lesson.
- Improve the rigour of self evaluation by ensuring that lesson observations by all leaders make secure judgements on the learning and progress of pupils.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The school's current data show that attainment is broadly average and that pupils make satisfactory progress. In most lessons pupils make satisfactory progress, although it is better in some. For example, a group of pupils in Year 2, motivated by the good modelling of their teacher, made good progress in applying the concept of multiplication as repeated addition. A group of Year 4 and 5 pupils sharpened their skills of persuasive writing by selecting idyllic pictures of Kerala (India) from a picture gallery and composing an impressive piece of writing to attract tourists. Sometimes, however, the pace of learning drops when pupils spend too long sitting and listening to a long introduction. Girls perform as well as boys and there is no group that is significantly underachieving. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language integrate very well with the rest and make satisfactory progress. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make sound progress because they are effectively supported by teaching assistants in lessons and when they work in small groups. Because teaching is not consistently challenging, more able pupils do not always make the progress they could.

Pupils have an accurate understanding of how to stay safe and to keep fit. They choose healthy food items during lunch, and are active at playtimes. Many spoke confidently to

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

inspectors about what they had learned from the police and fire officers who had visited their school. Pupils are attentive and concentrate well in lessons, especially when the teaching is engaging. They make a good contribution to the school community, for example as playground buddies and lunchtime helpers. Involvement in the active school council gives pupils a voice and enables them to gain the wider social and life skills they will need as they get older. During the inspection, an impressive school council session was led by two confident and eloquent Year 6 pupils. Pupils make thoughtful suggestions, like liaising with the local parish council to resolve the parking issue in the school vicinity. Pupils show respect for different cultures and beliefs and enjoy learning about them. During afternoon activities, pupils from different classes enjoyed learning about the movements involved in traditional Indian dance. However, pupils have less understanding of places of worship other than Christian churches. Attendance is above average and very few pupils are persistently absent. Almost all pupils get to school on time and are very responsive at the start of lessons.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

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

Some aspects of teaching are good. For example, teachers make clear what pupils are expected to learn during the lesson, reinforcing this with good links to previous learning. In the best lessons, pupils have well targeted work and are guided through the small steps that help to ensure effective learning. However, this is not consistent and sometimes pupils do not get enough feedback during the lesson on how they are doing and what to focus on improving. Though teachers present learning in different ways to sustain pupils' attention, they sometimes miss opportunities to deepen pupils' learning experiences through the effective use of technology. Teaching assistants give sound support to pupils who need extra help with learning in lessons and when they work on individual tasks as part of the school's effective intervention programmes.

Personal, social and health education is a strength of the curriculum and is having a good impact on pupils' personal development. During the regular class assemblies pupils get good opportunities to reflect. Motivated by a well-communicated story, Year 2 and 3 pupils thought about the difference between human needs and wants. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities that are well attended. The development of basic skills (literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology) across all areas of the curriculum, though satisfactory, is an area the school has rightly identified for further development. High quality care and attention to pupils' welfare ensures pupils feel good about themselves. Pupils are known as individuals and the care they receive is personalised and well targeted, particularly for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. They settle quickly into school due to the positive relationships between them and the staff. Good guidance for personal development ensures a confident move to their next class and school. Support staff have been effective in developing pupils' social and emotional skills so they are better prepared for learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	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 has created a strong, shared team spirit within the school and the local community, where the school is seen as the hub of village life. This is a harmonious and happy place, where pupils really get on well with each other and show respect for older people in their community. This shows the good impact of the school's work to promote community cohesion. The school recognises that global links are less well developed and has begun work to address this. Because promoting pupils' individual interests is at the

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core of all its work, the school takes its responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding very seriously, and is vigilant in ensuring the safety and well-being of its pupils. For example, both headteacher and governors have taken a proactive approach to further improve site security. Staff and the headteacher are very ambitious for their pupils. They work hard to support those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, and they ensure that there is no discrimination and all pupils have equal opportunities to participate in school life. New strategies are having an effect but monitoring systems do not ensure that the results of improvements are always systematically evaluated. This means that self-evaluation, though accurate, is not as sharp as it might be. Governors are fully committed to supporting the school, and hold it to account, but do not always probe its results with rigour.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

As a result of good provision, children in Reception make good progress in developing their skills across most areas of learning. Most children enter Reception in January with language and communication skills in line with those expected for their age. By the end of the year, they are now achieving standards that are slightly above average across most areas of learning. Given that most children spend less than one year in Reception, this represents good achievement. Though teaching is good overall, sometimes children sit on the carpet for too long and opportunities are missed to allow more able children to move on at a faster pace. However, the stimulating environment coupled with the teacher's consistently pleasant manner, motivates children to learn. There is a well

resourced outside area and a good balance of child-initiated and teacher-directed learning. Relationships between adults and children are warm and friendly, resulting in a nurturing environment where children can take risks and grow in confidence. Impressive displays of children's work adorn the classroom walls. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has developed effective systems for tracking children's progress and intervening swiftly to remedy underachievement.

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

A large majority of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The vast majority are of the opinion that their child enjoys school and the school is effective in promoting their health and safety. A very large majority also believe that the school is led effectively. A small minority are of the view that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. However, inspectors found behaviour to be good and the school's systems to deal with misdemeanours to be sound. A small minority also say that their child is not making enough progress. Inspectors' first-hand observations show that learning and progress is satisfactory but they noted that many pupils are capable of making better progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Little Waltham Church of England Voluntary Aided 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 92 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 146 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	59	35	38	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	61	33	36	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	28	30	56	61	6	7	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	32	44	48	14	15	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	37	40	44	48	7	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	30	49	53	7	8	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	39	51	55	5	5	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)	27	29	47	51	11	12	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	34	43	47	14	15	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	25	51	55	8	9	5	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	29	46	50	11	12	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	41	45	43	47	3	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	46	37	40	11	12	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



14 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Little Waltham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School,
Chelmsford, CM3 3NY

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. I particularly want to thank the pupils who gave up their lunchtime to talk to us. You go to a satisfactory school and some things are especially good. Here are some of them:

The care and support the school gives you is impressive. You and your parents know that you are well looked after.

You behave well and have good attitudes to learning; as a result your relationships with staff are very good and your progress is improving.

You have a good understanding of how to keep safe, for example you spoke eloquently about fire and road safety.

You lead healthy lives and make a good contribution to your school community, for example through the work of the school council and playground buddies.

Your headteacher and senior staff work well with many organisations to help you to do even better.

Here are the main things we have asked the school to improve:

Make sure teachers always give you work that is hard enough, especially those of you are quick to learn.

Make sure all teachers tell you what you need to do to improve, both in class and in the comments they write on your work. You can help by asking if you are not sure.

Keep a closer check on the progress you make in lessons.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Nasim Butt

Lead inspector

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