

# Inspection of a good school: Walter Halls Primary and Early Years School

Querneby Road, Mapperley, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG3 5HS

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Inspection dates:

12 and 13 July 2022

## Outcome

Walter Halls Primary and Early Years School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school because of the care they experience and the opportunities they are offered. They say that they feel happy and safe. They behave very well. They understand the clear expectations set out in three simple school rules, 'Be ready, respectful and safe.' Incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils say that any poor behaviour is dealt with swiftly by the teachers. Pupils like the way that they are not told off in front of everyone. They say that this approach works. One pupil explained: 'There is enough time for fun and enough time to learn.'

Most parents and carers appreciate what teachers and adults do. They believe the school is a 'lovely environment for the children to learn in'. The pupils come from a diverse range of communities and families. Governors have made sure that there are staff who can go the extra mile when a family needs help.

There is a range of activities to promote pupils' talents and interests. Pupils can attend clubs and enjoy themed weeks when additional experiences are planned. During this inspection, an 'Arts Week' was ongoing. In nursery, children learned about artists and tried out different techniques to produce their own art.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

There is an ambitious curriculum that starts in early years. Subject leaders have written plans so that teachers know what the pupils should learn and when. This helps them build their knowledge layer by layer. Teachers choose interesting problems to stimulate pupils' thinking. For example, pupils in Year 4 are challenged to think about diagonal lines of symmetry, building on previous learning about vertical and horizontal lines. Teachers ask skilful questions which help the pupils to deepen their understanding. As a result, pupils are able to explain their thinking well. Occasionally, plans are not precise. Teachers then sometimes use their own subject knowledge which may not be completely accurate.

Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) usually learn the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders sometimes adapt the curriculum if the pupil needs to learn a previous step. Teachers make sure that pupils with SEND are able to succeed.

The teaching of phonics and early reading is a priority. Phonics teaching follows a well-organised programme starting at the beginning of reception. Teachers check that pupils are remembering new sounds. They use this information to identify pupils who are not keeping up. These pupils receive extra help for as long as they need it. Teachers match reading books to the sounds pupils know. Once pupils know all the sounds, they are offered a range of other books to read. Pupils enjoy their reading.

In mathematics, teachers follow the curriculum plans. Teachers explain new concepts well and make good use of practical resources to ensure that the pupils understand what they are doing. Assessment is used to identify where pupils may have gaps in their learning. In an additional daily routine, pupils use practical resources to recall topics they have learned in the past. Pupils can explain their mathematical thinking well.

Children in early years get off to a good start. The curriculum here sets the scene for the full range of subjects coming later. The classrooms and outdoor areas are attractive and well resourced. Leaders have made good use of the grounds to create safe and exciting spaces where the children can play and learn. They are prepared well for Year 1.

This is a diverse and inclusive school. Pupils are taught to understand and respect cultures and ways of life that are different from their own. They are taught about respect, kindness and empathy, aspiration, curiosity, collaboration and perseverance. This is important for pupils' personal development while at this school, but also for future life.

Governors know the school well and they carry out their duties and responsibilities efficiently. They appreciate the strong leadership of the headteacher. They know how much the school has improved. Subject leaders are given time to develop curriculum plans. They appreciate the way that the headteacher has considered their workload. Senior leaders have also appointed pupil leaders who carry out their responsibilities well.

New leaders have written curriculum plans. They have developed roles and processes to support pupils who need help and they are beginning to collect information about how their work has improved the pupils' learning, attendance or safety. They are not yet stepping back and analysing information overall so that they can provide useful summaries to governors about patterns and trends.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Governors have invested in the safeguarding team. They ensure that staff receive regular training. Staff understand their responsibilities to keep a close eye on pupils and to pass on any concerns they have. They are alert to the possibility that even little changes in a

pupil's behaviour could indicate that something is wrong. Detailed records are kept and concerns are followed up quickly.

Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe in a range of areas, such as when they are using the internet and when it is a very hot day.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have prioritised reading, writing and mathematics to make sure that gaps caused by missed learning during the COVID-19 pandemic are identified and filled. The choice of content and sequencing of learning in other subjects has been planned but subject knowledge is not always precisely defined. New leaders have not yet set out how subject-specific skills should develop over time. Subject leaders should continue to work on curriculum plans for the wider range of subjects so that teachers know and understand exactly what should be taught and what leaders expect pupils to be able to do at each stage.
- The headteacher has supported the development of leadership across the school. There are knowledgeable and committed leaders for all curriculum areas and for key aspects of the school. These new leaders are monitoring and collecting data about what is happening. They are not yet stepping back and analysing that data to identify patterns and trends which they can then address. As a result, it is not easy for governors or themselves to see what is working well and what needs more work. Leaders should develop their understanding of patterns and trends by analysing and evaluating the impact of their work.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2017.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122456
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227260
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	428
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	James Sullivan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Emma Beardah
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.walterhallsprimary.co.uk">www.walterhallsprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24 November 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2019, just before the beginning of the pandemic.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders. She also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She spoke with the school improvement adviser.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in three subjects: early reading, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils from the lessons visited and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- The inspector reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding and attendance records and staff recruitment information, interviewing staff and having discussions with pupils.
- Pupil behaviour was observed in lessons and at other times around the school.
- The views of parents and staff were taken into account through Ofsted's online surveys. The inspector also met parents in the school grounds at the start of the school day and spoke to members of staff to gather their opinions about the school.

### **Inspection team**

Jo Ward, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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