

Dr Walker's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Fyfield

Walker Avenue, Fyfield, Ongar, Essex CM5 0RG

Inspection dates

26–27 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has brought about rapid change for the better. Staff share leaders' vision and ambition for the school and are committed to ensuring that the school continues to improve.
- Leaders have created a culture that is focused on pupils' well-being as well as their academic achievement. There is a strong sense of nurture and inclusion.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school and is relevant to pupils' needs and interests. This means that pupils are excited by their learning and achieve well across the curriculum.
- Rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics are improving for all pupils across the school and pupils are achieving well. This is reflected in pupils' attainment in national tests, which is at least in line with, or above, the national averages.
- The school's curriculum enables pupils to develop their knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects. However, assessment is not yet fully developed. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they could across all subjects.
- The school caters very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This helps pupils to develop positive attitudes. They take pride in their work and in their school.
- Governors challenge and support school leaders effectively. They know the school well and evaluate the impact of actions leaders have taken to improve the school.
- Children in the early years achieve well because of good teaching and the happy and stimulating environment in which they learn. Even so, the teaching of phonics in the early years and key stage 1 is not systematic and well-structured.
- Parents are positive about the school. They say that their children are happy and feel safe. However, the school needs to do more to ensure that parents feel better informed about their children's progress and achievement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of phonics by making sure that:
 - there is a clear rationale for the systematic teaching of synthetic phonics in early years and key stage 1
 - pupils have access to resources that enable them to practise the sounds they are learning, so that they become confident and fluent readers
 - pupils' learning in phonics is clearly linked to developing their skills in writing and spelling
- Develop procedures for assessment across the wider curriculum (foundation subjects) and in science, so that teachers plan opportunities for pupils that extend their experience and deepen their subject knowledge.
- Improve communication so that parents feel better informed about the progress their children are making in school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have created a positive culture of inclusion. Pupils and staff feel valued and are well supported. They share leaders' high expectations of learning and behaviour. The school is a positive environment in which to learn and to work.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They evaluate the effectiveness of the school's provision and set ambitious goals to improve outcomes for pupils. Improvement plans are well communicated to enable staff to be successful in their work. All members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire agree that the school is well led and managed.
- Leaders are effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Staff teach pupils to value their differences. Pupils know about different faiths and cultures. They understand why it is important to include others and they show this in their learning and at play.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils have a strong understanding of fundamental British values, such as democracy. Members of the school parliament represent pupils well. They use their influence to help bring about improvements in the school.
- The school's curriculum enables pupils to develop knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects. Cross-curricular 'learning quests' promote pupils' curiosity and help them make connections between subjects. Pupils are becoming more confident writers and mathematicians. They can apply their knowledge and skills in ways that are purposeful. The curriculum is well designed to meet the expectations of the national curriculum. However, assessment is not yet fully developed. This means that pupils do not have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and understanding and achieve as well as they could across all subjects.
- Teachers actively seek and respond to feedback. They share their skills and support each other well. Newly qualified teachers say that they are well supported. They appreciate the guidance they have received from leaders within the school and training from the local authority.
- The actions of leaders to promote equality of opportunity have ensured that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are doing well. The special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator (SENCo) works closely with parents and other professionals to help meet individual pupils' needs. The SENCo provides high-quality training for staff so that they can support these pupils well.
- Leaders ensure that all pupils are given the support they need to be successful in their learning and achieve well. Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Leaders use the PE and sport premium well to increase pupils' participation and widen their experience of different sports.
- Parents are positive about the school. They say that their children are happy and feel safe at school. Most parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said that they would recommend the school to others. However, parents feel they are not well informed about the progress that their children are making in

their learning.

- Effective support from the local authority has helped leaders accelerate change for the better. Regular monitoring and review have ensured that leaders maintain a critical focus on what they need to do to improve the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed to the school and have a good understanding of their role. They recognise that 'leaders need to be allowed to lead'. Governors focus their work on holding leaders to account. They ensure that their legal duties, including safeguarding pupils' welfare, are fully met.
- Governors are clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors visit the school regularly. They meet with leaders and listen to what pupils have to say. Because of this, governors are well informed. They can accurately assess the effectiveness of the actions leaders are taking to address areas for improvement.
- Governors review the impact of the pupil premium strategy on the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and improving rates of attendance.
- Governors are positive about the support that the local authority has provided. This has helped them to develop effective governance practices.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors take seriously their duty to safeguard pupils and keep them safe. They have ensured that staff are clear that keeping pupils safe is everyone's responsibility.
- The school's single central record of pre-appointment checks is up to date and complies with legal requirements. All appropriate checks are carried out for staff, including agency staff, governors and volunteers before they are allowed to work in the school.
- Leaders ensure that all adults working at the school are kept up to date with safeguarding training. Teachers and support staff are clear about what they need to do to report any concerns and are confident that these will be acted on promptly by leaders.
- The school's procedures for dealing with child protection concerns ensure that suitable action is taken when necessary. Detailed records are kept securely, showing concerns that have been raised and the actions that have been taken as a result. The designated safeguarding leads are well supported by the local authority's safeguarding team.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Learning takes place in classrooms that are calm and purposeful. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Teachers plan lessons that build on prior learning. They challenge pupils and stretch their thinking. Pupils work well with others and

independently.

- Pupils write regularly and purposefully across a range of subjects. Teachers provide personalised feedback, which helps pupils develop their writing. Pupils are taught to edit and review their work and are developing their skills as writers. Pupils' progress in writing is improving across the school.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. Teachers plan sequences of lessons that build on prior learning. Pupils develop their conceptual knowledge and understanding and can apply their skills. Pupils are given work that reflects their starting point and next steps. Pupils are making strong progress.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. This allows them to plan learning experiences across the curriculum that are relevant and purposeful. There is a clear outline for progression in each subject. However, assessment in these subjects is not yet fully developed, which means that teaching is not always focused on challenging pupils so that they achieve more. 'Learning quests' develop pupils' curiosity and help them make links in their learning. Pupils develop their ideas, try things out, and are eager to share their learning.
- Teachers and support staff check pupils' understanding regularly within lessons. Feedback is clear and pupils know how to improve their work. They are eager to take on challenges that extend their knowledge and their thinking. Every classroom has prompts and reminders on display that pupils refer to frequently. These help pupils to maintain a strong focus on what they are learning. Staff know their pupils well, and what they need to be successful.
- Teachers cater well for pupils in mixed-age classes. They understand that different pupils have different needs. Effective planning and deployment of support staff enable pupils to learn well together.
- Although pupils achieve well in the phonics screening check, phonics is not taught systematically. In addition, teaching does not always promote the link between using phonic skills for spelling words as well as for reading them. As a result, some pupils are not developing confidence and fluency in their reading and need additional support to catch up.
- In music pupils are developing an awareness of rhythm, pulse, pitch and playing together. They are introduced to notation. Purposeful practice and effective modelling help pupils play together in time.
- Teaching assistants are very skilled. They provide effective support for pupils and understand what pupils need to help them learn well.
- Teaching assistants support pupils with SEND effectively. They are well trained and deliver very strong one-to-one and group support sessions. Pupils with SEND are fully included within lessons and make good progress from their starting points.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils describe their school as caring and friendly. They are happy and safe in school. They enjoy the range of opportunities that the school has to offer in lessons and through the range of school clubs that are available to them.
- Pupils elect members of the school parliament who meet regularly with the headteacher to discuss improvements for the school. Through their work, they have improved the resources that are available at breaktimes. Pupils encourage others to take better care of their school environment. They organise regular litter picks and have helped to raise awareness of the plight of bees.
- Pupils enjoy the challenges they are given in their work. They recognise that this helps them learn better and achieve more.
- The school community celebrates success through 'heroes' assembly. Pupils accept that they may not be nominated: 'You don't get upset because there's no point. It's much better to be happy for others.'
- Pupils understand the importance of including others. In their view, it would be boring if we were all the same. They recognise how playing games in physical education (PE) and merging classes helps them learn how to mix with others and ensure that no one is left out.
- Pupils are reflective about their responsibilities and understand what they need to do to be good citizens. Pupils can talk about issues such as colonisation and the Fairtrade Foundation because they explore these ideas as part of their learning.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online. They described ways in which they support younger members of their family to avoid risks when they are playing games on the internet.
- Pupils appreciate the support staff give them to help them manage change. For example, a Year 6 pupil explained how their teacher is helping them to understand their excitement and anxieties about moving to secondary school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour has improved since the last inspection. There is a clear policy in place, which is understood and followed consistently by staff and pupils.
- Teachers and support staff work effectively with pupils to help them manage their emotions in school. Mutual respect between staff and pupils is strong. This means that when issues arise, they can be resolved calmly.
- Pupils play well together and are well supported by adults. The outdoor play area is well resourced. Pupils enjoy playing in the extended mud kitchen, on the climbing

apparatus or in the willow huts.

- Pupils feel that staff listen to them and are there to support them. Staff take pupils' views seriously when dealing with incidents in school. This builds trust and respect between adults and pupils and enables them to find ways to help pupils improve their behaviour over time.
- Monitoring of behaviour incidents is robust and systematic. Incidents are followed up with considered support to help pupils manage their behaviour in school.
- Incidents of bullying are rare. This is because staff deal with issues and address concerns at an early stage.
- There is an orderly start to the school day. Most pupils arrive promptly and are ready for learning. Attendance is improving because leaders are imaginative about the needs of pupils and know how to support them when they are reluctant to come to school.
- Records show that leaders work hard with pupils and families to avoid exclusion. When a pupil is excluded there are clear expectations and support in place to help them be successful when they return to school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has improved. Pupils are much better prepared for their next steps in education.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6 tests rose significantly in 2018 and was above the national average. The small size of this group of pupils means that caution is needed when comparing published data because of the impact that one or two pupils can have on percentages. The school's own assessments and the quality of the work seen in their books indicate that the current Year 6 are achieving well.
- In key stage 1, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2018 was in line with the national averages. The proportion of pupils attaining greater depth in writing was similar to the national average. However, fewer pupils attain greater depth in reading and mathematics than in other schools nationally.
- Pupils have opportunities to apply their skills in reading, writing and mathematics in other subjects. Pupils are achieving well in music.
- In 2018 and 2019, most pupils in Year 1 achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check. However, the approach to the teaching of phonics is not sufficiently systematic. The books the children are given to read are not well matched to the sounds they are learning. This limits the opportunities pupils have to practise using the sounds they know to develop fluency and confidence in their reading.
- Pupils are not achieving as well in reading at the end of key stage 1. This is because some pupils are not reading often enough to improve their fluency and deepen their understanding of the books they read.
- Because leaders carefully check pupils' progress and provide effective support,

progress is improving for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.

Early years provision

Good

- There has been significant improvement in the provision for early years. Staff have carefully considered the organisation of the outdoor area. Children have access to a rich and stimulating environment.
- The leadership of early years is strong. Staff have created an environment in which children can thrive. Staff monitor children's well-being as well as their learning and progress. Children are confident, happy and welcoming.
- Children are developing very positive attitudes to learning. Staff encourage pupils to try new things. Daily learning challenges help children to focus when they are learning independently. Children take on the role of 'learning detectives' whose job it is to find examples of children who are engaged in their learning. This helps children understand what 'good learning' looks like. Children and adults reflect on their learning together.
- Children are involved in decisions about their learning. This helps children feel valued. As a result, children make strong progress in all areas of learning.
- Teaching is effective because planning takes account of children's different needs. Teaching focuses well on developing conceptual understanding in mathematics through concrete experience. Staff help children develop their use of language through skilful questioning. They help children make connections in their learning.
- Most children can use their growing phonics knowledge to decode words. Some children are not making as much progress in phonics as their peers. This is because the books they are reading are not closely matched to the sounds they are learning.
- Children have regular opportunities to write from personal experience. They use phonetically plausible spellings and can read their writing to others.
- Learning journeys are detailed and show that pupils are making good progress. Observations made by staff recognise achievements and identify next steps. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of learning.
- The school's strong culture of safeguarding is reflected in early years. Staff are clear that the procedures for reporting concerns and training are up to date.

School details

Unique reference number	115125
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10088651

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liz Bennett
Headteacher	Nicola Willis
Telephone number	01277 899 298
Website	www.drwalkersfyfield.ik.org
Email address	admin@fyfielddrwalkers.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 March 2017

Information about this school

- This is a small rural primary school with a Reception class and three mixed-age classes: Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6.
- Almost all pupils are of White British background.
- The school has a higher proportion of girls than boys.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education and health care plan is in the top 20% of schools nationally. The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- Dr Walker's is a Church of England school and part of the Diocese of Chelmsford. The most recent Section 48 Inspection (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) took place on 7 November 2017.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning over time. The inspector observed teaching and learning across the school jointly with school leaders.
- The inspector looked closely at the work pupils were doing in their books and discussed this with pupils and leaders. The inspector observed pupils while they were working in class and when they were at play. The inspector spoke with pupils throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a range of the school's documents, including minutes of governors' meetings, the records of evaluations carried out by the local authority and by the diocese, leaders' records to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, assessment information and the school's website.
- The inspector checked the school's single central record of pre-employment checks and other documentation concerned with the safer recruitment of staff and volunteers and those who carry out work in the school.
- Meetings were held with leaders, staff and governors, a representative of the local authority, and groups of pupils.
- The inspector took account of the 25 responses to Parent View, as well as feedback from pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Katherine Douglas, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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