

Inspection of Walter Infant School

Murray Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG41 2TA

Inspection dates:	3 and 4 December 2024
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since November 2013. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils find this school inspirational. They are captivated by the child-friendly environment, knowledgeable teachers and Walter, the school therapy dog and friend to all. Everything about this school is deliberately designed to meet the needs of its pupils – and it does.

Pupils have a deep understanding of the school's high expectations, which are consistently taught right from the Nursery. They delight in wearing their hard-earned values badges. Pupils are proud when their behaviour is celebrated in assemblies by adding a personalised leaf to the school's kindness tree.

A passion for equity and fairness runs throughout the school, which makes pupils and staff feel valued. The curriculum topics chosen, resources used, and texts read are testimony to the school's joyful celebration of diversity. Many pupils arrive at the school, new to the country and at the early stages of learning English. Because of the welcoming ethos, they feel secure and quickly begin to enjoy new friendships and learning.

The school radiates high standards. Pupils are systematically taught how to meet them. Adults are knowledgeable about how young children develop, and they teach pupils securely what they need to know in the right order. Consequently, pupils make rapid progress through the curriculum, no matter what their starting points are. They are exceptionally well prepared for moving on to junior school.

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

Pupils find learning irresistible in the Nursery, where staff exude enthusiasm for songs and stories. Children quickly develop confidence as they practise holding a pencil, forming letters and writing their names. Adults know precisely what each pupil needs to progress on to more difficult learning, and there are no limits or barriers to pupils' achievement. Adults create many opportunities for children to practise the key skills they need, and they are exceptionally well prepared for Year 1. The school is quick to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or difficulties (SEND). Adults knowledgeably adapt the environment, resources and teaching so that pupils with SEND are enabled to achieve as well as they can.

The school has developed an ambitious 'big curriculum for little people'. It is continually refined, based on their meticulous analysis of pupils' needs. The curriculum is exceptionally well developed. It prioritises, in a coherent sequence, exactly what pupils throughout the school need to be successful learners and achieve highly. Pupils learn much of the curriculum through purposeful wider opportunities such as growing vegetables in the schools' garden, visits from the farm and making decorations for the town's Christmas tree. Pupils delight in remembering these experiences, which teachers skilfully use to explain and recall curriculum ideas. Staff systematically check what pupils can do and make sure that their learning is secure before moving on to more difficult areas of the curriculum.

Reading is taught excellently. Many pupils come to this school at the early stages of learning English. In response to their needs, teachers have honed their expertise in teaching reading. For example, in Reception, there is a strong focus on listening through singing and chanting rhymes. As soon as pupils are ready, adults encourage them to learn the sounds that letters make and start writing them independently. Any pupils who struggle are supported by expert staff to keep up in lessons or catch up through additional teaching in small groups.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable in lessons and at social times. Staff take a consistently positive approach. They build pupils' self-esteem and confidence, rightly becoming pupils' trusted adults. Pupils are taught how to understand their feelings and ways of managing them. This is at the heart of pupils' consistently calm, focused behaviour and ability to learn independently. As pupils get older, they become resilient, independent learners and there are no limits to them achieving highly.

Personal development is a core part of the school's curriculum. Pupils are inspired by trips and activities to enhance the curriculum, such as dragon dancing in the Lunar New Year and the reindeer visits to school. Pupils enjoy many opportunities to develop their character. Right from Nursery, pupils contribute to democracy through their roles as school councillors. They influence decisions about playground equipment, school meals and book choices. Older playground pals help younger pupils as they lead play at social times. The school teaches pupils how to look after themselves by eating healthily and staying safe when using the internet.

Governors understand their strategic roles and contribute knowledgeably to the school's vision. They are passionate advocates for disadvantaged pupils. They support and challenge the school effectively while ensuring that staff well-being and workload stay high on the agenda. The school focuses staff development and ongoing coaching on meeting pupils' educational and pastoral needs. Staff are proud to be part of this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	109869
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10341243
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	298
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ghislene Lokuciewski
Headteacher	Judy Hargreaves
Website	www.walter.wokingham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 and 20 November 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, music and design and technology. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher, the senior leadership team and representatives from the local authority. The lead inspector also met with members of the school's governing body.
- The inspectors met with groups of pupils about their learning.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interest first.
- The inspectors considered parents' views expressed through the Ofsted Parent View.
- Throughout the inspection, the inspectors met with groups of staff. They also considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.

Inspection team

Jo Brinkley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

James Everett

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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