

# Waltham St Lawrence Primary School



Children dressed up in red clothes and had great fun learning all about the Chinese New Year



Headteacher Li-Juan Ellerton

Waltham St Lawrence Primary School is located in rural Berkshire, where everyone works collaboratively to 'inspire and achieve together', as our motto says. With a total of 140 children, from the ages of four to 11, it prides itself on its ability to give pupils the individual attention that they need to flourish. It follows an active learning approach and adapts learning styles in accordance with different age groups. Headteacher Li-Juan Ellerton goes into more detail about what makes the school successful.

The school is tucked away in a remote part of Berkshire, and both its location and quality of staff offer a space for children to learn and grow. Character building and holistic development are just as important as learning to read and write. Therefore, our school system is entirely transparent and we encourage the active involvement of parents in their children's education.

Our motto, 'Together We Inspire and Achieve', is embedded throughout the school and in order to further exemplify our best practice, in consultation with our governors, pupils, parents and teachers, we have 'unpacked' this motto by creating an acrostic that we believe summarises our educational intention. It reads as follows: Willingness, Aspiration, Love, Trust, Happiness, Achievement, Motivation (Waltham); Success, Teamwork (St); Loyalty, Appreciation, Working hard, Responsibility, Empathy, Non-judgemental, Caring, Enthusiasm (Lawrence); Confidence, Honesty, Independence, Learning, Determination (Child).

## Values-based education

At Waltham St Lawrence we teach children from a range of backgrounds and pride ourselves upon this diversity and our inclusive practice. The core values of

### REPORT CARD WALTHAM ST LAWRENCE PRIMARY SCHOOL

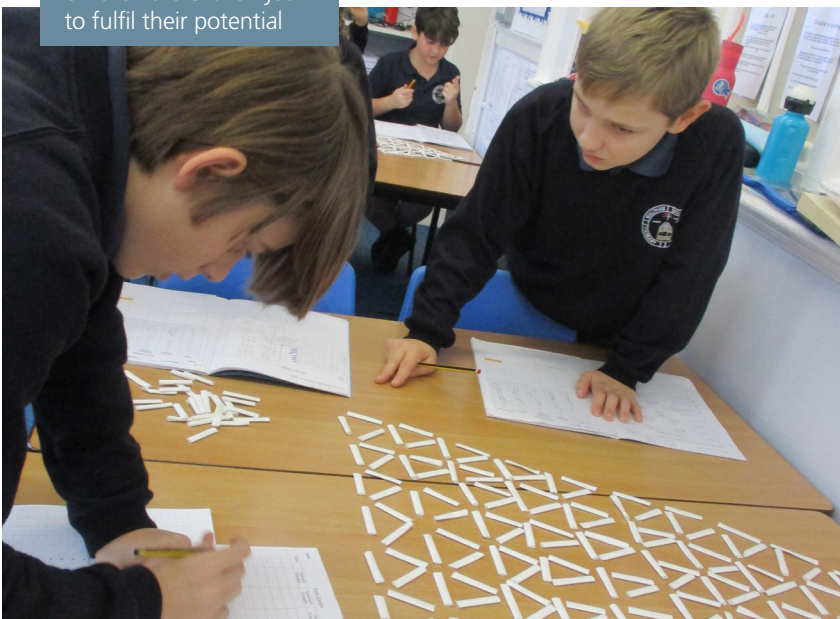
- » Headteacher: Li-Juan Ellerton
- » Founded in 1910
- » Location: Waltham St Lawrence, Berkshire
- » Type of school: Primary
- » No. of pupils: 140
- » [www.wslprimary.org](http://www.wslprimary.org)



Through daily Silent Sitting Practice, children learn to relate positively to themselves, their peers, their teachers, their families and the world around them

“Character building is central to our educational approach”

There is no limit to learning, we make sure children are challenged to fulfil their potential



Love, Truth, Peace, Responsibility and Community underpin everything that we do. While these are broad values on the surface, we dig into each one in forensic detail and allow the children to understand the actions and thought processes included in each. These lessons encompass the importance of teamwork, honesty, self-reliance, resilience, inclusion, citizenship and conservation. This has been a central part of our provision since 2013, supported by the Human Values Foundation, and it has become a defining area of strength. We are currently following The Big Think SMSC updated programme which covers all aspects of the new RSHE curriculum. Instilling these values in children from an early age inspires them to lay solid foundations that will prepare them for their next

stage of education and empowers them to achieve their full potential and live a fulfilling adult life as responsible citizens.

Character building is central to our educational approach and the way we teach and learn is defined by our philosophy to educate the Whole Child. We foster each child's character strengths, develop good habits in children and improve wellbeing by supporting the rising numbers of young children with mental health issues. This includes tackling childhood anxiety and unhappiness, and supporting learning behaviour strategies. We promote whole-school unity by our focus on strengthening the relationships between staff, children, and parents and we have a broader impact on local and wider communities through our emphasis on social action.

We often take an active role in community events, whether to raise funds for good causes or simply to engage with people in the local village. We also broaden our children's life experiences by organising visits in the local area. Although we are not a church school, we hold a number of events in the parish church as a way of enhancing our relationship with the community and engaging with parents. For example, each year we team up with the church in making donations to a local food bank.

### Children at the heart

The pupils are the most important people in our school, while our staff are the most important resource. Working with my staff team, we have developed a broad, coherent and enriching curriculum that is inclusive and personalised wherever possible. This is particularly important in the current circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic, with pupils out of the classroom for a large part of the academic year. We have been innovative and embraced new technologies to ensure the success of our remote

learning. We have put in place a detailed support programme for children with specific barriers to learning, backed up by high expectations and outstanding teaching using metacognition strategies. Thanks to this approach, those children were able to make accelerated progress incredibly quickly – testament to our Quality First Teaching philosophy.

Parents are our school's most important partnership. During the pandemic, we have made special efforts and specific provisions to pass on knowledge and skills to our parents to assist them during lockdown. This has involved regular input, online courses and resources for the parents so that they can deliver high standards at home, without confusing their children or leading to significant disruption. We are in constant pursuit of excellence and despite the difficulties of 2020, we have doubled-down on this goal. Not only do we have the Growth Mindset, but we also constantly move forward by researching, developing and adapting the latest teaching pedagogy and resources to ensure we remain on the right tracks, always improving what we teach and how we teach it.

We are a forward-thinking school and offer children the opportunity to learn Mandarin as part of our broad and enriching curriculum. Mandarin is one of the most vital languages internationally and the enthusiasm for it has grown year on year. Teaching children another language from the age of four allows us to further develop our own methods of teaching, using a range of visual, stimulating, formal and informal language learning styles as age appropriate. We also explain culture differences to our children, contributing to a holistic education. Learning Mandarin not only increases our children's cultural awareness but also prepares them as global citizens.

In recent years we have been twinned with a school in China which I visited as part of our Exchange Programme



Values underpin everything we do. We engage all stakeholders in our school community to explore together the role of values in our school, at homes, in the community and the world

with my deputy head and English subject leader. We welcomed teachers from our sister school for a week-long visit when teachers from both schools collaborated, sharing good practice and learning from each other. Additionally we have developed a partnership with Reading University to support their training programme for Chinese teachers of English by offering them teaching experience at our school to further their teaching skills. We are very proud to be able to play a vital part in training overseas teachers, which is testament of our own best practice.

### Ready for next steps

Despite the unprecedented nature of Covid-19, we have taken every measure possible to keep our pupils on the right track, whether that means embracing technology or abiding by social distancing. Our parents have played a valuable part during the enforced lockdown and helped us to manage this difficult time.

Training our staff in how to get the most out of the technology at their disposal has been crucial, and it fills me with confidence that we are now better equipped than ever to handle the challenges that we may face in the future. We have learned which techniques work effectively and which do not, and it is this constant pursuit of knowledge and improvement that will continue to stand us in good stead.

“Parents are our school's most important partnership”