

Walpole Highway Primary School

School Road, Walpole Highway, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE14 7QQ

Inspection dates

28–29 September 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders are overly generous in some of their assessments of the quality of teaching and learning.
- Teaching is not consistently good across the school and in all subjects.
- The most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics, and so do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers' assessments are not always accurate in relation to pupils' achievement. This means that some teaching does not meet pupils' needs sufficiently for them to make consistently good progress.
- The teaching of phonics and of writing in key stage 1 does not enable pupils to make consistently good progress.
- Not all middle leaders have a clear picture of the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress at the school. As a result, they are not able to quickly address the areas that need improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- A high level of care is provided for each and every individual in a very nurturing and inclusive environment.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and at playtimes.
- The needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well catered for so that these pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through a broad and engaging curriculum.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching and learning are consistently good so that pupils' outcomes improve rapidly by:
 - using assessment information more accurately and effectively
 - providing better opportunities for writing, particularly in key stage 1 and in subjects other than English
 - providing more challenge for the most able pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics
 - improving the teaching of phonics in key stage 1.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - monitoring of teaching and learning looks more closely at the impact of teaching on learning over time
 - all middle leaders have an equally good understanding of standards and progress across the school, and play a greater role in improving teaching and learning
 - leaders hold teachers more rigorously to account for the standards achieved in all classes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- While leaders have secured a number of improvements in the school since the previous inspection, they have not ensured that teaching in all classes is consistently good. Leaders carry out regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning and provide appropriate feedback about strengths and weaknesses in individual lessons. However, they do not look closely enough at whether teaching is effective in ensuring that all pupils make good progress over time. As a result, their evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is overly generous and teachers have not been held fully to account for the standards achieved.
- A new system for assessing pupils' achievements has been introduced so that pupils' progress is tracked. However, leaders have not checked that assessments carried out by teachers closely match evidence in pupils' work. This means that in some cases teachers have overestimated pupils' achievements, and that leaders' judgements of the progress made by some pupils are too favourable.
- While some middle leaders have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning in their subjects, not all are equally well informed. For example, leaders for literacy do not have a clear picture of how well writing is taught in key stage 1. This is because they have not had sufficient opportunities to observe lessons and to look at pupils' work regularly enough.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because the leader for special educational needs carefully monitors the progress of these pupils, carrying out additional assessments where necessary. Targets for pupils are included in pupil passports. However, these are sometimes too general and need to be sharpened up so that they can be achieved within the given timeframe.
- Leaders have been successful in improving behaviour in school, which is now good. Leaders have ensured that systems for managing behaviour are in place and used consistently, resulting in a calm and orderly environment.
- Leaders have established an inclusive ethos where all pupils are welcomed and valued.
- The further development of systems across the federation has strengthened opportunities for professional development for teachers. The four schools meet together regularly, share practice and learn from each other. Staff speak highly of the school and the support that is provided for them.
- Parents are supportive of the school. They particularly appreciate the welcoming and nurturing ethos the school provides.
- The school has benefited from support from the local authority, working with advisers to develop practice, for example in mathematics, and to develop leadership skills.
- There is a broad and balanced curriculum in place with a range of good opportunities for learning within the curriculum and through after-school clubs and trips.

- Leaders provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils learn about British values such as democracy. For example, pupils have to apply to become a school councillor and pupils listen to the candidates' speeches before voting. They learn about tolerance and respect in assemblies and in lessons. This is ensuring that pupils develop into caring and responsible young people.

Governance

- Governors are highly committed to the school and take their responsibilities within the whole federation very seriously. They visit regularly and meet with senior and middle leaders in committees to discuss the school's information regarding how well pupils are achieving. However, because this information has not been wholly accurate, governors have not been able to challenge leaders sufficiently about pupils' performance.
- Governors check how additional funding, such as the physical education and sport premium provided to promote participation in sports, is spent. They know that pupil premium funding, provided to support disadvantaged pupils, is spent well and has been effective in ensuring that these pupils make good progress. Governors are able to identify where funding has had the most benefit.
- Governors with particular responsibilities carry these out diligently. For example, the governor with responsibility for attendance monitoring works with the deputy headteacher to carefully analyse any attendance issues and to check how leaders are addressing poor attendance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that keeping pupils safe is always top priority in Walpole Highway Primary School. All staff receive regular and very thorough training in how to keep pupils safe and as a result everyone knows exactly what to do if they have any concerns. This is clearly evident in the meticulous records kept by the designated safeguarding leader, to whom all concerns are passed and followed up swiftly. The school works effectively in partnership with outside agencies to ensure that robust action is taken when there are concerns. The family support unit, which operates across the federation, provides additional support for those families who are experiencing difficult circumstances which may impact on pupils' safety and welfare.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- While teaching is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6, it is not consistently good across the school and in all subjects.
- In key stage 1, some pupils are not making good progress in writing because there are too few good-quality opportunities provided for pupils to develop their writing skills both in English lessons and in other subjects. This is evident from the work in pupils' books. Where tasks are provided for pupils to write, these are not always well planned and delivered to promote learning. For example, during the inspection, pupils were writing about characters from a well-known story, but pupils just copied the teacher's writing from the white-board, and could not read back what they had written and so did not make progress.

- In subjects other than English and mathematics, pupils sometimes use the skills learned in literacy, for example in writing about a local legend, but the quality of writing in these subjects is variable. In addition, these opportunities for writing are not frequent enough and particularly in Years 1 and 2, pupils often copy sentences, for example about religious symbols, which have been written out by the teacher.
- In some classes, good resources are provided to support learning. For example, the resources for teaching mathematics, such as bead strings and number cards, help pupils to solve calculations. However, sometimes the resources provided do not help pupils to learn. For example, pupils in Year 1 were given a sheet to complete independently with words that they could not read, and pupils in Year 2 were not provided with the coins they needed to complete a mathematical task successfully.
- Teachers are sometimes inaccurate in assessing what pupils know and understand, including in end-of-year assessments, because they do not look carefully at the full range of pupils' work when making their judgements. This is particularly the case in writing. Teachers mark work, and sometimes provide suggestions for pupils to help them improve their work, in accordance with the school's marking policy. This is particularly the case in Years 5 and 6. In this class, pupils know that at the start of the day they need to read their teacher's comments and use these to improve previous work. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said that this helps them with their learning. However, sometimes teachers give little feedback on the quality of pupils' writing, for example by simply identifying a spelling that needs correcting.
- The quality of teaching and learning in subjects other than English and mathematics is variable, being stronger in key stage 2. However, across the school, there is too little challenge in these subjects, particularly for the most able pupils, with all pupils in the class completing the same tasks. This means that those with particular talents and skills in these areas are not given opportunities to extend their learning in lessons. Leaders have identified that this is an area for improvement and have included it in their development plan for this year. They have also put in place additional opportunities for the most able outside normal lessons. For example, pupils who are very good readers and writers work with others across the federation to help produce 'The Windmill' newsletter.
- Pupils say that they enjoy reading and the most able readers in Year 6 are given challenging reading tasks and texts. Pupils in key stage 2 who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and who are still at an early stage in reading are helped to develop their reading skills through engaging activities. For example, pupils were working outside together to sound out initial sounds and blends, enjoying the opportunity to match the sounds and accompanying actions. However, phonics sessions for younger pupils are not pacy enough and so some pupils do not learn enough by the end of the year to be able to pass the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Pupils are well behaved in lessons and are keen to learn. They are happy to share their work with adults and many pupils spoke to the inspector confidently about their learning.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported in lessons. For example, in Years 3 and 4, pupils who struggle with mathematics were given a well-planned task at an appropriate level for them and provided with number cards to help them, supported by a teaching assistant who asked suitable questions to extend learning.

- In some classes, the needs of pupils of different abilities are met well in English and mathematics because the teacher plans work at different levels. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were given comprehension tasks with reading texts at different levels of challenge, and questions which involved the most able pupils in using more complex reading skills. Pupils in this class said that if they found work too easy, the teacher would quickly provide an additional challenge.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school provides a warm and nurturing environment for pupils. All adults are very aware of difficulties faced by some pupils out of school and take steps to ensure that they feel safe and secure when in school.
- The majority of pupils in the school are confident in talking to adults and happily talk about their work. The school encourages this confidence, providing good opportunities in lessons and assemblies to reinforce pupils' self-esteem. For example, pupils spoke about the Friday awards assembly, saying that this encouraged them to try even harder with their work. In lessons, particularly in upper key stage 2, pupils are expected to talk about their work, for example explaining their reasoning in mathematics so that they develop their skills in mathematics but also in speaking about their learning.
- The school encourages positive attitudes to learning. For example, work entitled 'Change your mind' provided opportunities for pupils to think about how a positive attitude will help them in school and beyond. However, where not enough is expected of pupils by adults, their attitudes to learning are not as strong and they do not work as hard, or as rapidly as they could do.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities about how to keep themselves safe, for example when using technology such as mobile phones and the internet. As a result, they have a good understanding of what they should and should not do to keep safe.
- Good opportunities are provided for developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example, pupils learn about different faiths in lessons; they learn social skills through working with pupils from the other three schools in the many federation events, such as the celebration of Roald Dahl's birthday and in sporting competitions. They take part in events such as poetry festivals and drama productions; pupils enjoy learning about other cultures through, for example, Indian workshops and learning about art from around the world.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and in the playground. This is because leaders have taken effective action to improve behaviour at the school. All adults and pupils know the behaviour rules and sanctions and staff are consistent in applying these.
- Pupils are given opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example looking after play equipment at lunchtimes, and they do so responsibly. At lunchtimes, older and younger pupils sit together, with older pupils helping younger ones when needed.

- Pupils who have behavioural difficulties are well managed. They are supported well, with interventions planned by the special educational needs leader to help them improve their behaviour, and in lessons by teaching assistants and others. As a result, they rarely disrupt learning and the school is a happy and peaceful place for pupils to work.
- Pupils told the inspector that behaviour at playtimes is good and that bullying is extremely rare at the school. While only a very small number of parents responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire, the school's own survey and discussions held with parents before school demonstrate that parents feel that behaviour is good and that any problems will be quickly resolved.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The school has a high degree of pupil mobility, with a large number of pupils who have joined the school in key stage 2 within the last two years. In addition, the school has a relatively large number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This affects the school's overall statistics for pupils' results, particularly with such small numbers of pupils in each year group.
- The school's 2016 Year 6 results in the new reading and mathematics tests were poor. However, two thirds of the pupils who took the new tests joined the school in Year 6. The school's results in writing, which are based on teacher assessment and not actual test results, are much higher.
- In Year 2, the 2016 results were also below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This small group included a high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- In Year 1, only half of the pupils passed the Year 1 phonics screening check. This is the same proportion as in the previous year. This is because the teaching of phonics in Years 1 and 2 does not always enable pupils to make rapid enough steps in their learning.
- Across the school, some pupils make good progress, as shown by the work in their books, particularly in Years 5 and 6. However, some assessments made by teachers overestimate the progress that pupils have made, particularly in writing. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not making consistently good progress in writing because they are not given enough high-quality opportunities to develop their writing skills.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, progress for the most able is not sufficient because they are not given sufficient challenge and opportunities to extend their learning.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged make good progress because they are well supported. The provision of learning mentors, for example, ensures that barriers to learning for these pupils are identified and overcome. This support ensures that the most able pupils who are disadvantaged also make good progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, often from very low starting points. This is due to the good support that is provided for them through resources, additional teaching support and pastoral care.

Early years provision

Good

- In 2016, a very small number of children were in the Reception Year. These children made good progress from their starting points to achieve a good level of development by the end of the year.
- Good provision is made for children in the Reception Year within a mixed-aged class. Older pupils provide good role models for younger ones, and so those children who have just joined the school quickly learn the routines expected of them. For example, Reception children knew how to line up, to get into a circle and what to do if they need to go to the toilet.
- Good procedures are in place to ensure that these youngest children are kept safe. Staff are trained in first aid for young children as well as in what to do if they have a concern about a child.
- Relationships between children and adults are good. Children in the Reception Year know that they can ask an adult for help.
- The environment is engaging and attractive. The outside area has a good range of activities for children, for example sand play, construction and small-world play. These tasks provide opportunities for children to learn independently and together.
- Children behave well because they are quickly introduced to the class expectations. They play sensibly together and share their resources. For example, children were playing with Play-Doh and one child joined and had no Play-Doh so another quickly and willingly shared his.
- Parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning. For example, the online assessment tool used by the school is accessible to parents so that they can find out what their child has been learning and also contribute with examples of learning from home.
- Adults support children well, for example, sharing stories with children and helping them to develop their pencil control so that they begin to write. However, occasionally, children's learning is not extended to make them think hard enough about what they are learning.
- The teaching of phonics is not always as engaging and pacy as it could be and so some children do not quickly gain a good knowledge of the sounds that letters represent.

School details

Unique reference number	120887
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10011840

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Gordon
Headteacher	Jill Davis
Telephone number	01945 880329
Website	www.walpolehighway.norfolk.sch.uk
Email address	office@walpolehighway.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Requires improvement

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is a much smaller primary school than is usually found nationally. Pupils are taught in three classes in the mornings; class 1 with Reception Year and Years 1 and 2, class 2 with Years 3 and 4, and class 3 with Years 5 and 6. In the afternoons, all key stage 2 pupils are taught in a single class.
- The majority of pupils are of White British background and few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than is found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, not supported by an education, health and care plan or statement of educational needs, is above average.

- The school is part of the Windmill Federation, sharing a headteacher and a number of staff, including the deputy headteacher and leader for special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school has a higher level of mobility than is found nationally.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed lessons in all classes. Some observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspector looked at pupils' books, school assessment information, the headteacher's evaluation of teaching and learning and a range of school documents.
- The inspector spoke with a small number of parents, took account of two responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and the school's own parental survey, and 12 staff responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, and met with some pupils from Years 4 to 6.
- The inspector listened to a small number of pupils read in Years 1 and 2, and Year 6.
- The inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority and with three members of the governing body.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks made during the recruitment of new staff.

Inspection team

Maria Curry, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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