

Walmore Hill Primary School

Walmore Hill, Minsterworth, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL2 8LA

Inspection dates

22–23 November 2017

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 provides strong leadership and has successfully steered the school through a period of considerable turbulence. Consequently, the school is now more stable. A parent, typical of many, commented, 'The school is transformed in terms of how it looks and feels and pupils' attitudes and enjoyment.'
- All adults are aspirational and work with steadfast determination to support pupils. As a result of good teaching, most pupils make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Adults place pupils' welfare at the heart of everything they do. Leaders monitor their work carefully, adapting the curriculum appropriately to plan personalised support to meet pupils' emotional, social and academic needs. This improves pupils' confidence and helps them to engage in their learning.
- The necessary focus on securing many pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics means that pupils have not yet had sufficient opportunities to secure their skills in a wider range of subjects. It has also somewhat limited opportunities for them to apply their reading, writing and maths skills in other subjects.
- Pupils respect each other regardless of their differences, which allows them to feel valued and form strong friendships with others.
- Effective use is made of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs. As a result, pupils are provided with precisely targeted support, which is improving their achievement. They need continued support to accelerate their progress, so that they can catch up and reach the highest standards that they are capable of.
- Teachers plan work which stimulates pupils' enthusiasm, although assessment does not consistently ensure that teaching challenges pupils to reach the highest standards.
- Leaders, teachers and support staff have high expectations of pupils and pupils are keen to learn. This enables pupils to have positive attitudes to learning and they behave well.
- Children benefit from good teaching in the early years, which helps them to get off to a good start.
- Leaders build on positive partnerships with parents to emphasise the importance of regular attendance. This needs further work to ensure that attendance continues to improve.
- The governing body is fully committed to the work of the school and governors contribute effectively to school improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To improve teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - improving the precision of assessment so that teaching consistently challenges pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics, and so that they reach the highest standards they are capable of
 - continuing to accelerate pupils' progress in all subjects so that lower-attaining pupils catch up.
- To improve leadership and management by:
 - continuing to work closely with parents to improve attendance so that pupils benefit from all the opportunities that the school offers
 - developing the curriculum so that pupils have more opportunities to apply and develop a wide range of skills across different subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and assistant headteacher, along with governors, have successfully led the school through a very difficult period of change in recent months. As a result, the school is now in a much more stable position and parents comment positively on the hard work of leaders, the positive atmosphere and the 'lovely family feel' of the school.
- Leaders are highly ambitious for pupils and are dedicated to making sure that all pupils are happy and well cared for. This means that leaders never rest on their laurels and remain resolutely focused on ensuring that pupils have every chance of realising their full potential.
- Leaders' precise understanding of many pupils' specific, complex and changing needs means that they frequently review and adapt their approaches. This assures them that teaching is specifically personalised to help pupils to make the best progress they are capable of.
- Leaders know their families well and realise that they need to communicate with parents in different ways. Consequently, they use a variety of forms of communication, including social media, to share information with parents. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the support the school provides for their children and typical comments include 'The school could not do more for us' and 'They always listen to our concerns...I never feel rushed or hurried'.
- Pupil premium funding is well targeted at providing emotional and academic support for pupils. The targeted support is developing pupils' self-esteem and accelerating their progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Additional training for staff is well planned to help them to gain a greater awareness of precisely how to target the support that they provide.
- Leaders make very effective use of additional funding for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. They seek the support of outside agencies when required and create bespoke learning plans for pupils, which they regularly review and adapt. This helps to ensure that teaching is appropriate and sharply focused on helping pupils to catch up.
- Leaders recognise the need to challenge the most able pupils and consequently enable these pupils to work with older children and access more challenging work. This helps pupils to extend and deepen their skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders use the primary physical education and sport premium successfully to employ a physical education specialist, whose work is supporting improvements in teaching. This is raising teachers' confidence in teaching a range of physical education skills. The school also uses the funding to employ former marines to run a 'mini marines' club. This enables pupils to engage in outdoor activities, which help them to keep healthy and raise their aspirations of what they can achieve. The club is also developing pupils' values of self-discipline and motivation. Leaders plan to use the funding to improve pupils' participation in sport and develop their swimming and gymnastics skills.
- Leaders and teachers are powerful role models for pupils and actively promote pupils'

understanding of fundamental British values and their place in modern Britain. Leaders encourage pupils to draw up their own school rules, which typically help pupils to understand the rules of law. Reflecting on the effect of their actions allows pupils to appreciate the values of tolerance and respect. Pupils learn about democracy by, for example, voting for school council members.

- Leaders and teachers encourage pupils to value their own culture and heritage, which helps pupils to reflect on and appreciate the differences between their lives and the lives of others. This creates harmonious relationships between pupils. A parent commented, 'Everybody is treated the same, the children don't notice the differences between them, they just bond with each other and get on.'
- Leaders form mutually beneficial relationships with partner schools and the local authority, which allows leaders to share ideas, evaluate their work and support the professional development of staff. Morale is high because leaders support staff well and value their work.
- Leaders work thoughtfully and carefully to ensure that they fully support pupils' transitions through each stage of their education. For instance, the local playgroup accesses the school's provision for part of the week. Pupils' previous familiarity with the school helps them to settle when they join the early years. Leaders also work closely with parents to prepare and support pupils as they move on to secondary education.
- Leaders provide a range of meaningful and enriching opportunities to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils enjoyed learning about the significance of Remembrance Day and, with the support of a local resident, created poems and artwork to commemorate the occasion.
- Leaders are highly sensitive to the fact that many pupils, for varying reasons, are unable to access the formal curriculum. Leaders' insightful knowledge of pupils helps them to adapt the curriculum to help pupils to catch up. For example, they provide basic skills teaching, small-group support or counselling. This improves pupils' confidence and self-esteem and allows them to develop a readiness to learn. However, leaders know that this support cannot be rushed and that it takes time to have a measurable impact on pupils' academic attainment. Leaders are fully aware that pupils will need continued support to accelerate and sustain their progress.
- Leaders' focus on developing pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills has restricted their ability to ensure that pupils develop secure knowledge, skills and understanding across other subjects. Leaders have recently reviewed the curriculum, but the effects of this are not fully embedded, which means that pupils do not yet secure strong progress in a wide range of subjects. Pupils are also limited in the extent to which they can develop reading, writing and maths across the curriculum.

Governance of the school

- Governors are fully committed to sustaining the long-term future of the school and are very keen to support the work of leaders. As a result, they play an active role in the school's continuing improvement and ask pertinent questions to hold leaders to account. This helps them to assure themselves that leaders' actions are making a difference.

- Governors have a secure understanding of the school's key priorities and help leaders to monitor the work of the school to gain a better understanding of its effectiveness.
- Governors are keen to gain the support and confidence of parents and pupils and, as a result, they contribute to newsletters and arrange for interesting visitors to come to the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders liaise effectively with parents to ensure that the safety of their children remains paramount. Parents are grateful for their enduring support.
- The school's single central register is compliant with requirements and ensures that all adults are safe to work with pupils. Staff receive regular updates to training and have a good understanding of the potential risks that pupils face. This means that staff know the signs that could indicate a pupil might be at risk and they recognise when to refer these pupils to leaders.
- Leaders keep secure and detailed records and refer concerns to external agencies in an appropriate and timely manner. They do not shy away from pursuing further support when necessary, to assure pupils' welfare.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and teaching assistants have warm, caring relationships with pupils and make good use of praise and positive reinforcement. This means that pupils feel well supported and are keen to engage in their learning.
- All adults in the school have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning. As a result, pupils know what is expected of them and settle to work quickly and enthusiastically.
- Teachers plan exciting learning opportunities, which motivate pupils to participate in learning. For example, pupils listened carefully to the story of Red Riding Hood and enjoyed using puppets when their character spoke.
- Teachers and well-trained teaching assistants have a good understanding of pupils' abilities and monitor and adapt teaching carefully. This helps them to ensure that teaching is focused on the specific skills that pupils need to develop. Adults provide clear explanations and demonstrations, which help pupils to secure and build on the skills they have acquired. For example, pupils listen carefully and practise partitioning counters into tens and ones, which supports their understanding of place value.
- Adults generally use clear questions, which help them to find out what pupils understand. During learning activities, adults regularly check pupils' understanding, which helps them to pick up on and correct pupils' mistakes. This refocuses pupils' learning, allows adults to reshape learning and supports pupils to make better progress.
- Adults recognise that pupils' learning sometimes stalls when they need emotional or behavioural support. For this reason, they ensure that pupils benefit from opportunities

to talk about their feelings and concerns. This puts pupils in a better frame of mind to access their learning, which is vital for helping them to make academic progress.

- Teachers promote a love of reading through the provision of a library and reading corners, which encourage pupils to select books and read for pleasure. The teaching of reading is good and develops pupils' ability to decode words accurately, read fluently and develop their comprehension skills. Pupils who read to the inspector said that they love reading and they talked enthusiastically about their books.
- Pupils listen carefully to stories to gain ideas to use in their own writing. Younger pupils enjoyed talking about what they would do if they met an alien and wrote, 'I would play with him' and 'I would go in a boat.'
- Where teaching is strongest, teachers demonstrate a secure subject knowledge and work is precisely matched to pupils' abilities. As a result, pupils make strong progress. For example, pupils enjoy solving problems in mathematics and applying their knowledge of multiplication to work out related division facts.
- Teachers provide pupils with consistent feedback in line with the school's policy. This helps pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils are routinely given opportunities to respond to feedback and this allows them to secure and deepen their skills.
- Pupils are keen to engage in the school's exciting wider curricular activities and fully immerse themselves in interesting projects with visiting experts, such as Sacha Dench and Ian Redmond. Pupils enjoyed tracking the flight of swans and learning about elephants, which sparked their enthusiasm for learning and a thirst to find out more about the world in which they live.
- There are some inconsistencies in assessment, which means that some teaching does not routinely take account of pupils' starting points. As a result, pupils are not always fully challenged or supported to achieve what they are capable of.
- Teachers have rightly focused on developing pupils' English and mathematics skills but this has hindered the development of pupils' skills in other subjects. It has also limited opportunities for pupils to apply their reading, writing and mathematics across the curriculum.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- All adults who work in the school respect pupils' different backgrounds and fully embrace the school's philosophy, 'all different, all equal'. This value is lived out in all of the work of the school.
- Pupils' emotional and physical health is well supported by the nurturing support of all adults in the school. This improves pupils' confidence, self-esteem and engagement and they value their learning. Consequently, pupils are better placed to take ownership of their learning and make better progress.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school's actions to support their children's personal

development, typically commenting, 'Children thrive and get the best of everything here' and 'My child has blossomed and bloomed.'

- Adults' clear explanations and consistent expectations mean that pupils are ready to learn and usually listen carefully, which helps them to understand what to do. Pupils know that adults will help them and this means that they are not afraid to make mistakes. This gives them the confidence to persevere with their learning.
- Leaders encourage pupils to take on entrepreneurial challenges and pupils recently raised funds for victims of the Grenfell disaster by creating 'marvellous milkshakes'. Pupils were justifiably proud of the success of this venture, which enabled them to raise several hundred pounds for the disaster fund.
- The 'Wyldwood project' provided pupils with the chance to provide company to elderly residents living in a care home. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed reflecting on the lives of an older generation and sharing experiences with them. This proved to be a powerful way of encouraging pupils to be responsible, caring citizens.
- Leaders employ a range of personalised approaches to supporting pupils' attendance, but, despite their very best efforts, some pupils have particularly high rates of absence. Leaders continue to work sensitively with parents to share the importance of regular attendance.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave incredibly well and are keen to learn because they know what is expected of them. Pupils feel safe at school and say that they enjoy learning because adults help them.
- Adults and pupils have mutually respectful relationships with each other, which help to foster positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils recognise that poor behaviour affects learning and they enjoy supporting adults to promote positive behaviour. As a result, they have drawn up their own school rules and produced a leaflet to raise awareness of bullying. 'Stop' is boldly displayed on the leaflet and reminds pupils that bullying is 'several times on purpose'. It also reinforces the message that pupils should 'start telling other people'.
- Leaders log and monitor breaches of behaviour carefully. This helps them to take action swiftly when behaviour falls short of the school's expectations. Leaders create tailored behaviour plans and provide additional support for pupils, which reduce disruptions to pupils' learning. Pupils confirm that behaviour is generally good and say that when it is not, adults quickly sort it out. Parents have no well-founded concerns about behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Good teaching ensures that pupils currently in the school are making effective progress in reading, writing and mathematics. There are some striking examples of strong progress over time, particularly for pupils who are disadvantaged or who have SEN

and/or disabilities. This is because teaching is sharply focused on meeting pupils' individual and often complex needs. Evidence gathered during the inspection confirms that effective teaching is helping pupils, including the most able pupils, to reach standards closer to those expected for their age.

- Leaders' insightful knowledge of pupils helps in preparing them well for the next stage of their education. Due to many pupils' low starting points when they come to the school, leaders have taken the necessary steps to secure pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. This is helping them to catch up quickly.
- Most pupils, over time, meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. This gets pupils off to a good start in reading.
- Due to small numbers of pupils at the school it is not possible to make comparisons with pupils nationally. Although, over time, the proportion of pupils who reach expected standards at the end of key stage 1 and 2 is variable, this is improving.
- Pupils read widely and often. They are developing secure phonic skills, which give them the ability to read with confidence, fluency and good understanding.
- Some teaching is not consistently pitched at the right level to ensure that pupils are sufficiently challenged, and this occasionally limits what they are able to achieve.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years is a welcoming and engaging environment and offers exciting activities for children. The 'space station' and cosy book corner invite children to explore their understanding of the world and develop a love of reading.
- Good teaching ensures that a high proportion of children reach expected standards at the end of the early years and this has improved over time. Children are therefore well prepared to make the transition into Year 1.
- Adults develop sensitive and caring relationships with children, which help children to feel secure. Adults have high expectations and model the behaviour they expect. As a result, children behave well and enjoy making friends with others.
- Adults in the early years are well deployed and explain tasks clearly and carefully, checking that children understand what to do. This encourages children to listen and follow instructions, which guides their learning.
- The professional development of staff is well planned. Adults working in the early years are well supported in improving their teaching.
- Children are provided with well-planned activities and engaging resources which help them to develop skills across different areas. They enjoy developing their communication skills through stories and songs and use their phonic knowledge to spell words.
- Adults in the early years form close working partnerships with parents, which help them to share and celebrate children's achievements. Parents fully appreciate the support that adults provide and comment favourably on how well their children have settled into the early years.

- Good assessment ensures that children's needs are identified quickly and that teachers take the necessary action to ensure that children make good progress. Leaders recognise the importance of sustaining good teaching so that children consistently reach the highest standards they are capable of. As a result, they are implementing a new form of assessment to sharpen their understanding of how well children are achieving across all areas of learning.

School details

Unique reference number	115548
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10037067

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	49
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	John Henry
Headteacher	Brett Stevenson
Telephone number	01452 750373
Website	www.walmorehillschool.co.uk
Email address	head@walmorehill.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 November 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Over the last few months it has rapidly grown in size, due to the imminent closure of a nearby school. The school now has 50% more pupils than it did last year.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes; one class includes pupils who are in the early years, Years 1 and 2; the second class includes pupils who are in Years 2, 3 and 4; and the third class includes pupils who are in Years 4, 5 and 6. The children from the local playgroup, Bright Horizons, join the youngest pupils in the school for two afternoons per week.
- The school is partnered with Pillowell and Blakeney primary federation. The headteacher of Walmore Hill is headteacher of all three schools. A consultation process is under way to enable Walmore Hill to join the federation.

- A small proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium.
- There are very few pupils whose first language is not or is believed not to be English.
- Approximately three quarters of pupils are from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller heritage.
- Approximately one third of pupils in the school receive SEN support. Very few pupils are supported by a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- Floor standards, which are the government's minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6, are not applicable because of the small number of pupils in the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classes and small-group interventions during the inspection. Some observations were carried out jointly with the assistant headteacher and headteacher.
- The inspector had several discussions with the headteacher and other senior leaders throughout the inspection. The inspector held two separate meetings with governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents provided by the school, including the school's evaluation of its work, attendance and behaviour records and safeguarding documentation. Leaders shared the school's latest assessment information with the inspector.
- Several pupils read to the inspector and, throughout the inspection, the inspector had several discussions with pupils to gain their views of the school, including during a formal meeting.
- The inspector met with several parents and other relatives during the inspection. The inspector also took account of nine responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and 13 responses to a recent parent questionnaire. Seven pupil responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire were also considered.
- Pupils' books across a range of subjects and classes were scrutinised jointly with the headteacher and assistant headteacher.

Inspection team

Catherine Beeks, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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