

# Inspection of a good school: Walmore Hill Primary School

Walmore Hill, Minsterworth, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL2 8LA

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Inspection date: 4 July 2023

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Walmore Hill is a small, friendly and inclusive school, where everyone is welcome. Parents say it is a 'safe, caring, kind community where everyone knows and looks out for everyone'. All year groups play together, and pupils are considerate of each other. The school's motto of 'All different, All equal' is realised. Differences are understood, and pupils are all equally valued.

The new leadership team members, including the governing body, are making the needed improvements to several aspects of the school's work. However, this work is recent. It is not yet having the impact needed on pupils' learning. Pupils do not always learn the wider curriculum well enough. Additionally, large numbers of pupils do not attend school regularly. This means they fall behind in their learning.

Pupils behave well. They agree that there is no bullying and feel safe at school. Pupils learn how to keep themselves healthy and active. They learn to treat others with respect. However, they do not learn about aspects of fundamental British values well, such as democracy.

The school provides a range of trips, visitors and extra-curricular clubs to enrich pupils' wider development. These include visits to historic sites, to literature festivals and to the theatre.

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

Leaders have put in place a new curriculum this year. Teachers have considered carefully the knowledge pupils need to learn. They have organised this into a logical order. However, teaching does not connect what pupils know to their next steps in learning. This means pupils do not build a deep enough understanding of subjects over time. For

example, in history, pupils do not understand the chronology of different periods they have studied.

Children in early years develop independence and follow routines. They get off to a good start in early language and reading. The phonics programme is taught in the same way by all staff. They show pupils how to blend sounds together to make words. Pupils who attend school regularly from the beginning of Reception Year learn to read as they should. However, some pupils do have gaps in their learning. Teachers provide extra help for pupils who need it to catch up in phonics and mathematics. However, some pupils who are behind in reading do not get enough practice reading books. This limits their fluency and accuracy.

Leaders review the breadth of books pupils read. Currently, pupils do not read a wide range of literature. They do not develop their reading comprehension skills sufficiently. This limits their love of reading and does not prepare them well for the next stage in their education.

Teachers and support staff have the knowledge they need to teach the curriculum. They present the subject matter clearly to pupils. Staff check pupils' understanding and explain where they have made mistakes. Teachers are starting to make precise checks on pupils' learning over time, so that they teach content pupils need to revisit.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the support they need. Leaders and teachers identify suitable targets. They provide activities to help pupils to develop and learn successfully. Staff make sure pupils have appropriate resources. For example, in mathematics, pupils use resources to help them understand number concepts. Pupils with SEND are well prepared before they move on to secondary school.

Disruption in lessons is rare. Pupils get on with their work. There is little negative behaviour across the school. Children learn how to treat others with respect, from the early years. Pupils are resilient when learning. Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive.

Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This impacts on their progress. Leaders have not acted swiftly enough to address this. They have started to take assertive action this year, but it is too soon to see the impact of this work.

The school provides effective pastoral support to pupils. Pupils learn the importance of looking after themselves. Staff provide a wide range of experiences to support their cultural development. For example, pupils learn to contribute to the community and to be active citizens by raising money for charities.

Leaders and governors work together to reduce the workload of staff. They provide training opportunities that support staff's development both in school and across the federation. Staff enjoy working at Walmore Hill.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors ensure that staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Staff receive training so they know how to spot the signs that a pupil might be at risk of harm. Leaders carry out appropriate checks on staff and volunteers who work on the school premises.

Leaders are diligent in their work supporting families who need help. They work with outside agencies to secure appropriate support. Leaders are advocates for pupils and their families.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The curriculum does not provide pupils with sufficient progressive breadth in the books they read. As a result, pupils do not read a wide enough range of literature to develop their knowledge and skills. Leaders should ensure pupils read a wider range of books through the curriculum, so that they are well prepared for their next steps in education.
- Pupils who are behind with reading do not have sufficient practice with the sounds that they are learning before they move on to learning new sounds. Consequently, they are not able to blend sounds with enough fluency. Leaders should ensure that pupils get the practice they need to read well.
- Too many pupils do not attend well enough. As a result, these pupils miss out on important learning. Leaders should ensure the recently introduced systems to improve attendance have an impact so that more children attend regularly.
- Pupils are not able to make connections between different aspects of their learning. Consequently, they do not build well on what they already know. Leaders need to ensure that teaching enables pupils to build sufficient knowledge over time.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2017.

## 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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115548
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268723
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	53
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Chris Fordham
<b>Interim executive headteacher</b>	Darren Preece
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.walmorehillschool.co.uk">www.walmorehillschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	22 and 23 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is federated with Pillowell Primary School and Blakeney Primary School.
- Walmore Hill is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- There are two mixed-age classes.
- The school has a pre-school class that attends for three days per week.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has an interim executive headteacher from another school in the local authority.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, curriculum leaders, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and staff. The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body.

- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in three subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. During the deep dives, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work and met with teachers and pupils.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1 and 2 read to an adult and listened to pupils in Years 3 and 4 read.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the responses to the staff survey.
- The pre-school children were not on site during the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Jen Edwards, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Tonwen Empson

Ofsted Inspector

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