



Walmore Hill Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115548
LEA Gloucestershire
Inspection number 279625
Inspection dates 12 June 2006 to 12 June 2006
Reporting inspector Patricia Potheary AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Walmore Hill
School category	Community		Minsterworth
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL2 8LA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01452 750373
Number on roll	66	Fax number	01452 750373
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	27 September 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Lois Lipington

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Walmore Hill is a very small rural school with only three classes. The school has relatively high numbers of pupils with learning difficulties. Very few pupils are from ethnic groups other than White British. There are several traveller pupils. Despite indications that the school catchment area contains socially advantaged families, pupils have very mixed and often deprived social backgrounds. High numbers of pupils, in most year groups, join or leave the school each year.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Walmore Hill is a happy and effective school with a strong community spirit. It provides a good quality of education and good value for money. This matches the school's own view of its effectiveness. Because the school has improved significantly in the last year, pupils in all age groups, including children in Reception, now make good progress and achieve well. This is mainly because teaching has improved substantially and is now consistently good. Pupils really enjoy school, especially their lessons, and are confident that they are doing well, confiding that 'If you try hard, you will succeed.' Pupils have good personal skills, showing respect and consideration for others. This is because they are well cared for and guided carefully in how to behave and improve their work. A good curriculum helps pupils to find learning interesting. Provision in Reception is also good. Good leadership and management have overcome substantial barriers recently in order to identify and improve several key areas. The most important of these has been to track carefully each pupil's progress and use the information effectively to improve teaching and learning. This is not yet sufficiently embedded to ensure that all pupils, especially the most able, always make good progress. Governance is satisfactory, but does not yet monitor pupils' performance well enough to support and challenge the work of school improvement sufficiently. The school has the capacity to continue improving.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to track and monitor each pupil's progress carefully so that pupils of all abilities, especially the most able, can be helped to reach suitably challenging targets.
- Strengthen the governors' role in monitoring achievement and progress; to better hold the school to account for reaching high standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are broadly average in most year groups, although pupils enter Year 1 with below average attainment. Standards vary widely from year to year. High inward mobility, high numbers of pupils in some years with learning difficulties, and very small year groups all serve to make the overall picture very mixed. Pupils in all age groups now make good progress and achieve well. The picture has improved rapidly in the last two years, but especially this year. Before that, many pupils were not learning enough. Now that all teaching and learning is good, pupils are beginning to catch up and meet challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and those from traveller backgrounds usually progress and achieve well. Not enough of the most able pupils throughout the school reach the higher levels yet, although this is improving. Mathematics is improving but remains the weakest subject where pupils' progress is now generally satisfactory. Performance is strongest in science and most pupils do well in reading and information and communication technology (ICT).

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Good personal development and well-being means that pupils generally show a mature and caring attitude to others and behave well. There are no exclusions, for example. The school's own surveys indicate that pupils' self-esteem improves as they move through the school. Satisfactory attendance is improving each year, although it remains low, due to the irregular attendance of several traveller pupils. It is clear from lessons that pupils enjoy what they do and parents feel that their children look forward to coming to school. Pupils feel safe, behave safely and are insistent that there is almost no bullying. Pupils are keen to describe how much activity and sport they do to keep healthy and how much fruit they eat. Most, but not all, choose to bring healthy packed lunches.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. They show clear moral understanding and good social skills and have a sound awareness of their own and other cultures. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. Many pupils have responsibilities and care for younger pupils. They also represent the school through performances. The school council acts on suggestions and are proud of the new lockers, which have been brought about by listening to their classmates. This and pupils' personal, social and basic skills, including ICT, prepares them well for their future work. They have recently been learning how to deal with distractions, which will be particularly useful.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching in all classes is leading to consistently good learning for most pupils, including children in Reception. Teachers are well organised and have lively, exciting lessons where pupils know exactly what they have to do and how well they are doing. Pupils are successfully encouraged to work well together. Learning is thoroughly assessed to help each pupil to make good progress from one lesson to the next, especially for those with learning difficulties. Teaching assistants contribute significantly to the good learning taking place, often taking whole year groups with effective and skilled teaching. All classes have mixed age groups, which are taught appropriately most of the time. However, this means that the beginning and endings of lessons, where the whole group comes together, can lack challenge for the most able pupils. Their learning is sometimes slower at these times as a result.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good, carefully planned curriculum meets the needs and interests of pupils in mixed age and ability classes. It is organised well to build learning systematically from

one year to the next. Opportunities for improving basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT are included in all subjects. As a result, pupils are prepared sufficiently well for the next stage of their education. Provision in Reception is also good, although there is nowhere for outside activities when it rains or snows. The curriculum is appropriately enriched through performing arts and sport, although the number of visits and visitors is satisfactory rather than good. However, there is a very good, imaginative range of after school clubs which many pupils enthusiastically take part in. Many activities are planned to teach pupils how to be healthy and keep safe, including a charming vegetable garden, where pupils recently used what they had grown to cook a vegetable curry.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good, helping them to remain safe and, more recently, make better progress. Child protection procedures and other safeguards are securely in place. Pupils think that 'Staff are kind and are here to help us.' Several initiatives, such as the successful focus on 'our desirable learning behaviours', promote pupils' evidently good personal development. The school is now tracking individual pupils' progress well and setting them suitably challenging targets. This has had a significant impact on helping most pupils to begin to reach higher standards. However, the system is still relatively new and, although it has helped some higher ability pupils to reach the higher levels, this is not secure in all age groups. Pupils and parents are involved in this process of setting targets and this has contributed to a common approach in understanding what pupils have to do to improve. Pupils are guided well towards the next stage of their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good, resulting in some key recent improvements and better progress for pupils. There have been several barriers which have slowed improvement since the last inspection, the most significant being the rebuilding of the school after a fire. In addition, there were unavoidable difficulties with the quality of teaching, which have now been dealt with. All previous issues have been addressed, with the exception of governance, which remains satisfactory. Governors are committed, know the school well and play an active role. However, they do not monitor information about pupils' progress in sufficient detail to support school improvement, or hold the school sufficiently to account.

Good self-evaluation, which takes account of parent, pupil and local authority views very well, has meant accurate identification of the steps needed to improve the school. The headteacher has made a very strong link between teacher and pupil performance and this, alongside professional development, has turned around a school that was beginning to see standards slide. The teachers and teaching assistants all agree that

their teaching and pupils' learning have improved as a result. There is good capacity to continue improving.

Overall, pupils' equal opportunities are good, especially for traveller pupils and those with learning difficulties, but less so for the more able. This anomaly is already being addressed. The school has good links with other schools and agencies for supporting pupils' well-being.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

13 June 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for being so helpful and welcoming to us when we visited Walmore Hill; we enjoyed the time we spent with you very much. We can see why you find the school such a good place to learn. We also enjoyed meeting the staff and joining you for some of your lessons.

Here are some of your school's highlights:

- How much you learn and how much you enjoy your work.
- The way in which your teachers help you do well and make good progress.
- The excellent way you behave, help others, and work so hard in lessons.
- The good work you have done to help improve the school.
- The way you try to keep healthy by exercising and eating good food.
- The interesting subjects and activities you undertake.
- The way the staff really care for you and guide you in your work.
- The way senior staff work hard to keep improving the school.

What we have asked the school to do to improve even more:

- Continue to keep careful track of how well each one of you is doing so that all of you can be helped to do your very best and aim high.
- Ask governors to look more closely at how well you are doing so that they can ask the right questions and support further improvements to the school.

We wish you all the very best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Potheary Lead Inspector