

Walmore Hill Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 115548 |
| Local Authority | Gloucestershire |
| Inspection number | 326221 |
| Inspection date | 1 July 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Joanna Pike |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 67 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Steve Dailey |
| Headteacher | Sue Meek |
| Date of previous school inspection | 12 June 2006 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Walmore Hill Minsterworth Gloucester GL2 8LA |
| Telephone number | 01452 750373 |
| Fax number | 01452 750373 |

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|--------------------------|-------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This small primary school has provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in the youngest mixed-age class. Most pupils are White British and come from the village and surrounding area. About a fifth of children come from traveller families of Roma/Gypsy heritage. Many of these children are absent from school for long periods of time. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Of these, a significant number have moderate learning difficulties. The number of pupils leaving and joining the school is higher than in most schools. The school has gained the Activemark Award and Healthy Schools status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Walmore Hill is a satisfactory school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and show enthusiasm towards their learning. They say that, 'Everyone gets on really well, and we look after each other, just like a big family.' This sums up their outstanding social skills, which are promoted well by the adults in the school.

Sound provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage children enables them to make satisfactory progress and reach average levels by the start of Year 1. Across the rest of the school, pupils also make satisfactory progress, and results over recent years show pupils reaching standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 6. However, in 2008, results in English were pulled down by pupils' weaker writing skills. Although it still remains an area of weakness, the school's efforts to improve pupils' standards and progress in writing are beginning to have an impact. Current standards in Year 6, though still below average in writing, have improved, and almost all pupils have made at least expected progress. In Year 5, all pupils have made at least satisfactory progress in writing, with half making good progress. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good features. Teachers make it clear to pupils what they will learn, and the small steps that will help them to be successful. Teachers make good use of opportunities for pupils to explain their ideas to each other and this keeps learning active. On a few occasions, teachers let activities go on for too long so that the pace and the challenge in the work are not maintained. Opportunities are sometimes missed by teachers to use questions that really challenge pupils' thinking, especially the more able. Although teachers mark pupils' work regularly, they do not always indicate to pupils in the marking how they can improve their work.

The satisfactory curriculum gives appropriate emphasis to literacy and mathematics. Pupils greatly enjoy the trips linked to each term's topic, but rightly identify that they do not get enough exciting and practical activities.

Pupils' personal development is good. Their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils know why eating a balanced diet is important and enjoy growing their own vegetables. They keep fit through their participation in regular exercise. Parents value the good care and support of pupils, commenting that, 'This is a happy school.' They also appreciate the close partnership sought with parents. At the time of the inspection, procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety met requirements. Pupils have targets in reading, writing and mathematics. However, they do not always know their targets or what they need to do to achieve these, and teachers do not refer to them enough in lessons.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher accurately evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and has put in place good quality strategies to raise standards and achievement. In her short time in post, the headteacher has successfully established clear systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and staff are using the information gained with increasing accuracy to guide their planning and set targets for pupils. This is starting to show an impact with the improvement in writing, especially in Year 5.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision is satisfactory in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In most years, children start school showing attainment that is below the expected levels. However, for the current cohort, attainment when they started school was in line with the expected level for their age. They

have made sound progress due to satisfactory teaching and are on track to reach average standards by the end of the year. Children settle quickly at the start of the year because of good induction procedures that lead to a smooth transition from the pre-school. The effective care they receive and the good relationships with adults help them to gain confidence. Behaviour is good, and they work well with each other. Children benefit from the clear explanations which teachers give and being told how to make their work successful. Teachers tend to lead most of the activities and opportunities are sometimes missed for children to choose their own activity and to make better use of the good resources outdoors. This slows children in developing more independence. Some activities are not made as exciting as they could be to stimulate children's interest and enthusiasm.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has established accurate assessment of children's attainment and this is beginning to be used to track progress more closely, and to inform planning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement particularly in writing by improving the challenge and pace of learning in lessons.
- Ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of their targets and how to achieve them, and that teachers make full use of these during lessons and when marking pupils' work.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by providing more exciting activities which make better use of the outdoor areas and increase the opportunities for children to choose activities for themselves.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Children make sound progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and reach average standards by the start of Year 1. The satisfactory progress continues in Years 1 and 2. Due to a higher than usual proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities in the current Year 2 cohort, current standards are slightly below average. Through Years 3 to 6, pupils make sound progress and reach average standards by the end of Year 6. The school's efforts to raise pupils' standards in writing are beginning to have an impact. As a result, more pupils make the expected progress in writing and there have been particular improvements in writing in Years 3 to 5. Nonetheless, pupils' performance in writing remains weaker than in other subjects across the school.

Pupils from traveller families of Gypsy/Roma heritage made progress similar to other pupils, with some achieving well, and this is also the case for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good as a result of the good provision and care. Pupils feel safe and are confident that any bullying is quickly sorted out. They are safety conscious and are very concerned about the welfare of others. They go out of their way to look

after anyone who is hurt or upset. Their social development is outstanding. Pupils are extremely polite to each other, apologising if they interrupt one another. They are confident in talking to visitors. They respect differences of opinion and have a well developed sense of fair play. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is good. While pupils' overall cultural awareness is good, their awareness of how people from other ethnic backgrounds live their lives is generally underdeveloped. The school does all it can to encourage good attendance and the attendance of most pupils is satisfactory. However, the overall attendance rate is below average, due to the higher absence rate of some of the pupils from traveller families of Gypsy/Roma heritage. Pupils gain a satisfactory awareness of the need to contribute to the immediate and wider community. They respond well when given responsibility, such as raising money for charity and organising stalls at school fayres. However, the work of the school council is currently underdeveloped, and opportunities are missed to give pupils a greater role in contributing to the school community. Pupils' constructive relationships with others, and their satisfactory academic progress, help them to be soundly prepared to ensure their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers plan effectively so that learning is built up in steps. Teaching assistants are used effectively in lessons and with small groups. Displays of good examples of pupils' work and the key points in how a piece of work will be marked help support learning. Pupils benefit from assessing their own work using the key marking points. However, teachers do not always make best use of these in helping pupils know what to do next to improve. The level of challenge and pace in lessons sometimes drops because teachers let activities run on for too long. When marking pupils' work, teachers do not always give individuals a clear steer on how they can improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Increasingly good links are being made between subjects through using topics. For example, the castles topic has captured pupils' interest and led to a good deal of interesting work, including helping pupils improve their writing skills. The curriculum is satisfactorily enriched through a reasonable range of clubs and occasional visitors, as well as pupils' involvement in growing vegetables and flowers in the school garden. Also, good use is made of visits for each term's topic. For example, as part of their study of the Second World War, pupils dressed in costume as evacuees and visited the Swindon Steam Museum. One pupil said, 'It really helped me to understand what life must have been like in the war.' Effective provision for pupils' social and emotional development through activities such as 'circle time' contributes to their good personal development. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. It has improved because of more effective leadership and management. Pupils now have appropriate individual plans to support their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good quality pastoral care results in pupils showing good personal development. Staff look after the pupils well so that all individuals feel safe and secure. The school works effectively

with external agencies, such as the traveller education service, to support pupils and their families when appropriate. Good arrangements ensure that Year 6 pupils confidently transfer on to their new schools. The support and guidance provided for pupils' academic development is satisfactory because some pupils do not have a clear idea of how well they are doing or how to improve. Teachers provide pupils with useful targets. However, pupils do not have a clear awareness of their targets and are not given enough opportunity to check their progress towards them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher is giving the school a clear sense of direction. Since her arrival, she has accurately pinpointed what needs to be done and an effective plan is in place to guide improvements. She has enabled middle leaders to receive good training and support, and as a consequence they play an increasingly effective role in raising standards and achievement. The headteacher has established a sound procedure for monitoring and evaluating lessons. She has implemented effective systems for tracking pupils' progress so that underachievement is quickly identified and remedied. Disruption to staffing caused by absence through illness has hampered the implementation of the improvements. Nonetheless, school initiatives are starting to show an impact, with for example, better progress being made in writing in Years 3 to 6. The school's clear action plans and the improvements made in recent times show that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses through their regular visits. However, as yet, they have not fully developed their role of critically evaluating the school's performance.

The school's work to promote community cohesion is satisfactory. Provision has been audited and shows that the school is good at developing pupils' sense of being a member of the school and local community. However, the school has rightly identified the need to strengthen pupils' understanding about the national and global community.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being? | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 3 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 3 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 3 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 3 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 3 |

Achievement and standards

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

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 |

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 3 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

2 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Walmore Hill Primary School, Minsterworth GL2 8LAA

It was good to come and see you at your school. Thank you for making us so welcome, talking to us and helping us during our visit. Yours is a satisfactory school. We appreciated the good discussions we had with some of you. Here are some of the most important parts of the inspection report that we thought you might like to know:

- You make satisfactory progress and reach average standards by the time you leave.
- The youngest children in Class 1 have a sound start to school.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Activities are carefully planned, but sometimes are too easy for some of you or go on for too long so you do not always progress as rapidly as you could do.
- You look after each other really well and your behaviour is good.
- You want more exciting activities in your curriculum and we agree that this will help you to enjoy your learning more.
- The school makes sure that you all are safe, settled and secure. To improve further, we have suggested that the school does three things:
 - Raise standards and achievement particularly in writing by improving the challenge and pace of learning in your lessons.
 - Make sure the youngest-aged children in Class 1 have lots of exciting activities, especially outdoors, and more chances to choose which one to do.
 - Help you all know how well you are doing and what you need to do next to reach your targets.

Thank you again for all your help.

Yours faithfully

Joanna Pike

Lead Inspector