

Walmore Hill Primary School

Walmore Hill, Minsterworth, Gloucester, GL2 8LA

Inspection dates

11–12 November 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Standards in English have not improved at the same rate as they have for mathematics. Previous poor-quality teaching has hindered pupils' ability to use grammar, punctuation and spelling correctly.
- Key Stage 2 pupils are not making sufficient progress in French.
- Not enough Reception children achieve a good level of development by the time they join Year 1.
- Recent improvements across the school have not had sufficient time to become fully established.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to take on appropriate responsibilities.
- Governors are not monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school's work closely enough.
- The school's website does not include all the required information to fully meet the government's statutory requirements.

The school has the following strengths

- The new leadership team has transformed the school so that it is now a source of pride to the local community and those that work there.
- The improvements in teaching are inspiring pupils and making learning fun.
- Pupils behave well and want to do well.
- By working closely with families, leaders have improved pupils' attendance.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' outcomes, particularly in English, by improving their use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Improve Key Stage 2 pupils' ability to communicate in French by using simple sentences.
- Ensure that Reception children make the progress necessary to achieve a good level of development by the time they join Year 1.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to take decisions that affect them and their school.
- Strengthen governors' abilities to hold the school's leaders to account so that they can be confident that initiatives are improving pupils' outcomes.
- Ensure that the information published on the school's website fully meets statutory requirements.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The new leadership team has quickly established itself and taken control of the school's improvement work. The headteacher has wasted no time in leading a review of all of the school's systems to identify those that are working well and others that require improvement. This positive approach has quickly raised staff morale and brought about a tangible sense of purpose and excitement.
- Leaders have built on the work undertaken last year to improve the quality of teaching. Newly appointed teachers have quickly established themselves, which has brought about a rapid improvement in the quality of teaching. The opportunity to work with staff in two other local primary schools is promoting greater cooperation and a sharing of good ideas that are helping pupils to learn.
- The assistant headteacher's appointment as a full-time member of staff has brought a sense of stability to the school. She is taking a strong lead, demonstrating the quality of teaching expected. By exemplifying the standard of teaching required, leaders have been able to set demanding targets for managing teachers' performance. Leaders evaluate teachers' performance regularly to identify where improvement is still required.
- Many of the changes taking place are very recent and reflect the leaders' urgency in wanting the school to improve quickly. The teacher appointed to coordinate the school's support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has made a brisk start. She has reviewed the school's approach to ensure that teachers take greater accountability for pupils' progress. However, this initiative, as with many of the other new developments, has not had sufficient time to impact securely on pupils' outcomes.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet current requirements. The headteacher leads on this aspect of the school's work and it is given a high priority throughout the school. Staff have completed all the relevant safeguarding training. Further training has been planned, particularly relating to e-safety, to ensure that staff are familiar with their responsibilities for monitoring pupils' use of the internet. The assistant headteacher has completed training on the government's 'Prevent' agenda, which has raised awareness about the need to protect pupils from the risk of radicalisation. Staff at the school are vigilant at monitoring pupils' welfare. Concerns are followed through appropriately. Staff are diligent at maintaining detailed records of their actions and the resulting outcomes. School records and practice ensure that appropriate care is taken to ensure that recruitment procedures are safe.
- Staff at the school communicate well with families. The regular newsletters, texts and the improved website provide families with useful information about current developments. As a result, almost all families are very positive about the changes taking place and are much more willing to engage with the school.
- Pupils learn about the world in which they live by studying a broad range of themes that capture their interest and imagination. The current topic about space has been particularly successful. As a starting point, pupils visited '@Bristol', which fired their interest. Other carefully planned activities, including a visit from an astrophysicist, brought learning to life as pupils began to learn about the solar system. The opportunity to build and fly their own model rockets gave pupils first-hand experience of combining their science and mathematical skills in measuring the height the rockets reached. This approach to learning is proving successful as pupils show excitement and interest at being in school.
- Although the school has yet to fully develop a coordinated programme to promote pupils' understanding of British values, opportunities are being taken to do so. During the inspection, the school held a Remembrance assembly, which was poignant as pupils reflected on the symbolism of the event. Work undertaken earlier in the morning had been carefully designed to help older pupils understand some of the world history that lay behind the national day of remembrance and learn why Armistice Day had been renamed Remembrance Day.
- Pupils are being introduced to other cultures' celebrations. The assembly about Diwali provided a good example of how pupils learn about other faiths and understand the symbolism that is common to all cultures. This approach is laying the foundations for pupils to play their part in modern Britain.
- To promote pupils' personal development, leaders are following the local authority's programme, which supports the development of skills and knowledge needed to lead a healthy life. This approach, along with the increased opportunities for pupils to engage in a range of school sports clubs, is promoting pupils' appreciation and enjoyment of regular exercise.
- The school makes appropriate use of its additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. The support

being provided is helping these pupils make up lost ground and enjoy learning again.

- The physical education and sport premium is also being used effectively. The appointment of a sports coach has helped develop pupils' engagement in physical activity and promote their well-being. During sports and games lessons, staff work alongside the coach, which is helping to develop their skills and confidence in teaching physical education and sport.
- Leaders and governors have not published sufficient information about the use and impact of the school's additional funding on the school's website.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are fully behind the school and want to see rapid improvement in all areas of its work. They are determined to overcome the challenges they face to secure the school's long-term future success.
 - Following the wholesale change of staff over the summer, the governing body acted swiftly to ensure that the school was ready to open at the start of the new academic year. Partnerships have been formed with two local primary schools, which is helping to build confidence that the school has the leadership and staff in place to raise pupils' attainment. However, as a result of all the recent turbulence at the school, governors have not focused sufficiently on their responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating the school's efforts to improve pupils' standards.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Leaders' strong focus on improving the quality of teaching is paying dividends. Inspection evidence confirms that teaching has improved since the last inspection. Lessons are typically managed well with a clear learning focus. Planned activities are increasingly effective in deepening pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Parents are very pleased with the recent improvements and comment positively about how their children look forward to being at school. Pupils clearly enjoy their lessons, for example they learn new things and articulate the progress they are making. As a result, pupils apply themselves diligently, working quietly to complete the task set.
- With the recent change of staffing, there is now a stronger focus on teaching phonics (letters and the sounds that they make), which is helping strengthen pupils' engagement with reading. Those pupils heard reading during the inspection did so with confidence and pleasure. Reading records are completed regularly and show a good link between home and school.
- Teachers' expectations are much higher than was previously the case. Teachers expect much more from the pupils they teach and pupils are keen to please. The classrooms have been transformed into vibrant and stimulating areas with lots of work on display depicting learning taking place. Teachers explain clearly about the need to take pride in the work that pupils produce. Work in books provides strong evidence to show that pupils are responding positively to this determined approach.
- Teachers have good levels of subject knowledge. They use appropriately demanding vocabulary when teaching and require pupils to use this language when discussing aspects of the lesson. For example, in Key Stage 2 English lessons, pupils are becoming more confident when discussing names for the different words in sentences, such as adverbs and pronouns.
- Lessons are fast-moving and pupils work hard throughout the day. The quick-fire mental mathematics lesson observed in Key Stage 2 kept pupils on their toes throughout. Many of the pupils were really excited about being able to manipulate numbers quickly, accurately and with confidence. A few did find the activity quite demanding and were not always able to complete all the work set.
- Teaching assistants are an integral part of the teaching team. They often support pupils who need additional help to enable them to learn. They know the pupils very well and have a good understanding of their individual needs. Through careful questioning and encouragement they enable pupils who might otherwise struggle to learn and experience success.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Teachers' comments praise pupils for improvement and highlight where work could be strengthened. Younger pupils receive regular verbal feedback, which helps them make progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Attendance levels are improving and pupils arrive promptly at school, ready to learn. Leaders have worked successfully with Traveller families to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Many of the Traveller pupils are now participating in and enjoying the school trips, which is increasing their engagement with school.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. They spoke about how they enjoyed working with an artist to produce the new school mosaic on display at the front of the school. When in classes, pupils show care for the resources they use and are quick to follow teachers' instructions.
- Pupils move around the school sensibly and they enjoy socialising with one another at breaktime and during the lunch period.
- Parents are very confident that staff care about the pupils' safety. Pupils feel safe and describe their school as a very friendly one where everyone gets on. Bullying is not an issue and pupils know that they can talk to staff if they are worried about anything. Some of the older pupils take responsibility for talking with younger pupils during breaks and encouraging them to engage with other pupils.
- Pupils have few opportunities in school to take responsibility for making decisions about matters that affect their school and their lives. As a result, this restricts their personal development in terms of becoming more independent.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are keen to do well. They show positive attitudes to learning and apply themselves sensibly to the activities planned. They are increasingly developing the attributes of perseverance and independence.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is good. Relationships are strong and pupils enjoy playing together. Leaders react quickly when any incidents of misbehaviour do arise.
- Pupils behave well at lunchtime. Older pupils sit at the head of dinner tables and help younger pupils manage their lunch. The introduction of a 'Come dine with me' dinner table each Friday acts as a real incentive for pupils to show good behaviour. Pupils selected at the end of the week for good behaviour really enjoy the experience of sitting at the special table.
- During assemblies, pupils are respectful and reflective. The high-quality singing observed was a credit to the school as all pupils joined in willingly.

Outcomes for pupils requires improvement

- The standards pupils achieve throughout the school are too variable. The school has not yet ensured that pupils make consistently strong progress and fulfil their potential.
- In 2015, the proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check was below the national average. Pupils' outcomes were lower than in 2014, when all Year 1 pupils achieved the expected standard.
- Standards in English fluctuate as the legacy of previous weak teaching has limited pupils' knowledge and use of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Although current pupils are improving the presentation of their work, the quality of their writing is not yet at a sufficiently high standard.
- Key Stage 2 pupils learn French on a regular basis. Current standards of communication are low as the older pupils have only acquired a very limited knowledge of simple French words.
- Standards in mathematics at Key Stage 2 have risen over the last three years and are now broadly average, at both key stages. Pupils are benefiting from better teaching in mathematics and this is helping to speed up pupils' rate of learning. Pupils are increasingly confident to manipulate numbers and look for patterns when solving numerical problems.
- Current teaching is providing much greater challenge to pupils of all abilities. As a result, the most able are increasingly keen to challenge themselves as they find the work more interesting and stimulating.
- There are very few disadvantaged pupils in the school. In 2015, there were none in Year 6. Those currently in the school are making similar progress to their classmates. This is a significant improvement,

as in previous years these pupils often used low-level disruption strategies to disguise their disengagement with learning.

- Similarly, there are only a few pupils who are either disabled or have special educational needs. Inspection evidence confirms that, because of better teaching, these pupils are making more progress than previously and re-engaging in learning. When necessary, the school works closely with external agencies and other professionals to prepare an education, health and care plan for any pupil with individual needs. This ensures the pupil is able to benefit from additional support that may not otherwise be available through the school's resources.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- A legacy of weak teaching has hindered children's progress. The previous inconsistent approach to promoting children's development slowed their learning. However, the appointment of the current teacher has brought much-needed stability to the class. As a result, more children achieved a good level of development in 2015 than in 2014, when very few children reached the standard expected.
- Children joining the school in the Reception Year often do so with skills that are typical for their age. However, the small numbers of children in each cohort means that, overall, skills on entry can vary considerably. Those with skills typical for their age usually achieve a good level of development and are well prepared ready to start Year 1.
- The transition into school is managed well. The onsite pre-school works closely with the school to organise visits for children about to transfer to the Reception class. On joining the school at the start of the academic year, the children settle quickly ready to learn.
- This year, the teacher quickly gathered information about children joining the Reception class and put in place plans to support children's individual needs. The teacher in charge of the early years has developed good links with all the families and the parents often attend school functions to support their child.
- Staff in the early years class know the children well. As a result, children's personal development is managed well. The safeguarding systems are effective.
- The Reception children are taught as an integral part of the Key Stage 1 class. They have settled into the class routines and are beginning to learn and engage with other pupils. The teaching assistant, who is a key member of the team, is providing effective support to help a child with a disability and special educational needs adjust to school life.
- The teacher has a good understanding of the Reception children's abilities. When teaching the whole class, she plans activities that are often pitched at the right level to include the Reception children. The teaching assistant often works with them to direct their learning. During the morning, children enjoy developing their early writing and number skills. They also benefit from opportunities to learn through play, for example using modelling materials and having access to different materials, such as water and sand.
- The early years provision provides a good basis for children's learning. However, at the time of the inspection the home corner had not been fully developed into the planned space station and children did not use the outdoor learning area to extend their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	115548
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10004059

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	30
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Henry
Headteacher	Brett Stevenson
Telephone number	01452 750373
Website	www.walmorehillprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@walmorehill.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 January 2014

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- After the last inspection, the headteacher retired and the governing body seconded a headteacher from Woodside Primary School for a year to be the school's executive headteacher.
- The executive headteacher's contract ended in July 2015. To lead the school from September 2015, governors appointed the executive headteacher of a federation of schools made up of Blakeney Primary School and Pillowell Community Primary School. The school now has an assistant headteacher, who manages the school on a day-to-day basis, and two teachers.
- Following last year's reorganisation, there are now two mixed-age classes.
- Children in the early years are taught in a class with Key Stage 1 pupils.
- There are too few pupils in each year group to report the school's attainment against the current government's floor standards, which are the minimum standards set for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- A number of families with children at the school have long periods of seasonal absence, which means that the published attendance information is neither representative or comparable.
- An independently operated pre-school operates twice a week from a room within Walmore Hill Primary School. This did not form part of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in seven lessons, all of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. The inspector also observed two assemblies and pupils' behaviour during breaks and the lunch period.
- While in lessons, the inspector looked at pupils' workbooks and reviewed teachers' marking. The inspector also reviewed an additional sample of pupils' workbooks to evaluate their progress and attainment.
- The inspector reviewed documents provided by the school and information published on the school's website. These included the school's improvement plan, policies, reports, information about pupils' progress and minutes of governing body meetings. Logbooks of pupils' behaviour, safety and welfare and the school's safeguarding records were also scrutinised. Attendance information was also reviewed.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and many members of staff. He also met with three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority. The inspector also met a governor from the federation schools.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils, heard some read and talked informally to pupils in the playground and around the school.
- The views of parents were considered through reviewing the 11 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The inspector also spoke informally to parents arriving at the school. The views of eight staff were gathered via a written staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Ken Buxton, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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