

Walderslade Primary School

Dargets Road, Chatham, ME5 8BJ

Inspection dates 26–27 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching requires improvement. It does not consistently help all pupils to make good progress in every subject.
- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply their good English and mathematical skills in other subjects such as science, history and geography.
- Teachers' assessments of the progress pupils make are not always accurate. Work they set for pupils is sometimes at the wrong level of difficulty for pupils' abilities.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of the most able pupils.
- Pupils' progress in science, history, geography and physical education does not match their good progress in English and mathematics
- Senior leaders do not do enough to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in all subjects.
- Senior leaders do not always share out leadership responsibilities to other members of staff or help them to contribute to school improvement.
- The school's improvement plans are not clear enough to help leaders track their progress in improving teaching and achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Most pupils reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics at age 11.
- The teaching of reading and comprehension skills has improved following effective training for teachers.
- The teaching of early reading skills is consistently good. Older pupils enjoy reading widely.
- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery class. Teachers track their progress well and provide stimulating opportunities for them to become confident learners.
- Most pupils enjoy school; they feel safe and they attend well.
- Governors know the school well and ask challenging questions of school leaders.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons, of which seven were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors heard pupils read and scrutinised pupils' work in their books.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils, members of the governing body, school staff and representatives from the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of the 44 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including achievement data and monitoring records as well as documents relating to safeguarding.
- During this inspection, the inspector asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Michelle Winter, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Juliet Ward

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized primary school, with one class in each year group.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is taught in a Reception class, and a part-time Nursery which opened in September 2012.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is below average. This is additional funding for pupils entitled to free school meals, those in local authority care and those with a parent in the armed services.
- Approximately 90% of pupils are White British and very few pupils are new to speaking English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported through school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The school currently meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning so that they are consistently good in all subjects by ensuring that:
 - teachers' assessments of progress and attainment are consistently accurate and these are used to plan activities at the right level of difficulty for all pupils
 - teachers have high expectations of pupils in the full range of subjects across the curriculum
 - teachers provide work which challenges all pupils, particularly the most able
 - tasks interest and engage pupils so that their attitudes to learning are consistently good.
- Improve the attainment and progress of all pupils by:
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to apply their good literacy and numeracy skills in science, history and geography lessons
 - ensuring that support provided through pupil premium funding is effective in closing the gaps in attainment in all year groups.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - implementing a robust system to monitor teaching and learning and providing appropriate training to ensure teaching improves so that it is consistently good
 - checking that teachers' assessments of progress and attainment are consistently accurate
 - ensuring that middle leaders make an effective contribution to school improvement by distributing responsibilities more widely and ensuring all leaders have the necessary training to carry out their duties
 - ensuring that school improvement plans are more sharply focused so that leaders and governors can measure the impact of actions taken to secure improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is not yet good because it is uneven across subjects. Most pupils develop their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics well by the time they leave the school and standards at the end of Year 6 are in line with the national average. They make slower progress in subjects such as science, history, geography and physical education because the quality of teaching is too variable.
- Teachers do not always plan work that challenges and stretches the most able pupils. In too many lessons, teachers' expectations of all pupils are too similar. For example, the most able pupils often complete more written work than their peers do, rather than working at a higher level.
- Most pupils are making good progress in reading now. Younger pupils can use their knowledge of phonics (the sounds letters represent) to read new words. Pupils' use of phonics has improved since last year. Recently introduced catch-up sessions are helping pupils who have fallen behind.
- Most pupils can write for a range of audiences and purposes. They can spell and punctuate their writing appropriately because they have regular opportunities to write at length. The quality of their handwriting and the presentation of work is more variable. Teachers do not show younger pupils how to form their letters well enough.
- Most pupils have good basic mathematical skills. They learn the multiplication tables well, for instance, and can add and subtract confidently because teaching focuses well on developing these skills. In some lessons, some teaching does not challenge the most able pupils often enough to use these skills to solve complex problems.
- Most children enter the school with the skills expected for their age. Nursery staff use careful assessments of pupils to plan activities which develop children's skills of independence well.
- The quality of scientific work varies too much across year groups. The good progress in Year 5 is not replicated in all other year groups. Older pupils have too few opportunities to develop their scientific skills. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out investigations or to apply skills from other subjects, such as mathematics, to their science work.
- Teachers do not have a consistent approach to teaching history and geography, therefore progress is variable across year groups. Teaching does not meet the needs of all learners when expectations are too similar for all pupils. In some classes, the quality of writing does not match that found in literacy lessons.
- Pupils are not active enough in some physical education lessons and some lessons do not help them to become fitter.
- The impact of funding provided by the pupil premium is not evident in some year groups where the small numbers of pupils who receive additional support make slower progress than their peers. By the end of Year 6, pupils eligible for free school meals are approximately one term behind their classmates in English and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in some year groups but, as with their peers, this varies across the school. School leaders do not always check well enough whether the support given to these pupils is helping to ensure that they make consistently good progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The good teaching that results in most pupils reaching national averages in reading, writing and mathematics is not consistent across all subjects.
- Not enough is done to continually improve teaching and secure better progress in all subjects and for all pupils, particularly the most able.
- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use their well-developed basic skills in English and mathematics in stimulating lessons across all subjects in the curriculum. Some

teaching of science, history, geography and physical education fails to simulate or excite pupils' interest.

- Teaching does not focus sufficiently well on challenging the most able pupils. Teachers' expectations of the most able pupils are not consistently high enough. They often complete similar work to their classmates, particularly in science, history and geography. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 complete too many worksheets and this limits their learning.
- Teachers do not always check learning throughout lessons in order to adapt tasks to meet all pupils' needs. In these lessons, teachers do not notice quickly enough that some pupils do not understand, or that others are finding the work too easy.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are not consistently accurate from the Reception class to Year 6. Some of the assessment data teachers use to plan lessons is not reliable enough to ensure that lessons meet all learners' needs and that work is set at the right level of difficulty.
- The precise teaching of phonics pays dividends; younger pupils read confidently. There is a well-established positive culture of reading. Older pupils can name their favourite authors and they enjoy reading.
- Additional lessons, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, help pupils who are falling behind to catch up.
- The best teaching engages pupils' interest and enthusiasm well. This is not consistently the case and sometimes pupils find it difficult to maintain concentration when they are listening for too long or they do not understand the purpose of the lesson. In some weaker lessons, teachers' questions engage too few pupils and there are not enough opportunities for all pupils to contribute.
- Teachers' marking and feedback to pupils is often helpful in showing them how to improve. However, this is not consistent across year groups or subjects. In a few classes, teachers' comments are not specific enough to help pupils know how to improve their work.
- Pupils make good progress in developing information and communication technology skills. Year 5 pupils showed that they can plan and produce an interesting and relevant presentation on computers. They enjoyed learning how to add hyperlinks and sounds to their work, to add interest.
- Physical education lessons are not always active enough. The techniques of throwing, for example, are taught well, but pupils lose interest when they are listening for too long. They do not build stamina or fitness when they are not actively involved for lengthy parts of lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Most pupils behave well in lessons because they have good attitudes to learning. This is not always the case, however, and some pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 lose focus when lessons fail to excite their interest. When this is the case, there is too much off-task talking and fidgeting.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes behave well and can concentrate for lengthy periods on one activity. They work and play well together.
- Almost all parents and carers who expressed a view believe that their children are safe and happy at school. Pupils too say they feel safe and their high attendance is testament to how happy they feel.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and they can see the difference between bullying and one-off incidents. They say that bullying rarely happens.
- The school records incidents of poor behaviour but leaders do not monitor this information well enough to identify trends or to track the impact of their actions. Consequently, the same pupils repeat their poor behaviour.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- The systems to monitor and improve teaching and learning are not wholly effective. Leaders

observe lessons, examine pupils' books and review progress data but do not put all of this information together to gain an accurate view of teaching over time.

- Leaders' feedback to teachers following lesson observations is not as helpful as it could be because it does not focus sufficiently on the progress pupils make in lessons. Leaders do not follow up on teachers' targets for improvement quickly enough to ensure that matters improve and suitable training is not always provided to help teachers improve their skills.
- Senior leaders hold teachers to account for the progress pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics. The support to help pupils catch up in learning their basic skills is effective. The focus on ensuring that most pupils reach national averages in reading, writing and mathematics is successful.
- Leaders do not routinely check the accuracy of teachers' assessments and there are too many uncertainties in the achievement data teachers use to plan lessons.
- Middle leadership is not well developed. Some leaders are new to their role. The headteacher holds responsibility for too many areas of the school rather than sharing out duties across the leadership team. Consequently, some other leaders are not able to impact sufficiently on school improvement.
- Senior leaders' view of the school's performance is too generous. School improvement plans are unwieldy and do not include the important measures of success to enable governors and others to evaluate the impact of the school's actions.
- Leaders do not monitor the impact of additional support and teaching for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs well enough.
- Although the school provides a good range of subjects and activities for its pupils, expectations are not consistently high enough in some subjects such as science, history and geography. Leaders have not evaluated the effectiveness of physical education teaching that it purchases from another provider.
- Visits and enrichment activities, along with the school's personal, social and health education programme, promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils enjoy a range of opportunities to develop culturally, including through music teaching and visits out of school. Older pupils have good opportunities to take responsibilities, including by becoming school councillors or 'buddies' to younger pupils. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and most work well together. Teaching promotes social, moral and cultural development well.
- Pupil premium funding is not wholly effective in closing the gaps in attainment for the small number of pupils who receive additional support. In some year groups, these pupils are making slower progress than the average for the rest of the class. Leaders do not report the impact of pupil premium funding in enough detail to parents and carers via the school's website. In this respect, the school is only adequately tackling discrimination and promoting equality.
- The local authority makes clear its expectations for the progress and attainment of pupils at this school. Leaders, including governors, clearly understand these expectations. Local authority representatives monitor the school carefully, including through on-site reviews of teaching, learning and achievement data. They know the school well. The local authority has identified that school improvement plans are not fit for purpose and provided training for the leaders of English and mathematics to amend their plans. Training and support for the Early Years Foundation Stage has been effective in improving teaching. The local authority has provided links to three new governors with the skills and expertise to monitor and support the school well. It has provided effective training for all governors to ensure they can monitor school achievement data and ask challenging questions. It has also brokered links to local outstanding schools and a local leader in education to support school leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have the necessary skills and experience in education and governance to monitor the school rigorously. The governing body has a detailed knowledge of pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. They compare this with national averages, identify areas of relative weakness and ask detailed and challenging questions of school leaders. Governors also challenge the school to ensure that professional

development links to the performance management of staff. However, the headteacher does not currently provide the governing body with the important information it needs to evaluate the appropriateness of the staffing pay structure by comparing it with the quality of teaching. Governors know how pupil premium funding is allocated but do not receive enough information about the impact of this additional support. Safeguarding procedures, to check the suitability of staff to work in the school, are secure.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118321
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	405763

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Chappell
Headteacher	Angela Milne
Date of previous school inspection	21 September 2010
Telephone number	01634 337766
Fax number	01634 337763
Email address	office@walderslade-pri.medway.sch.uk

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