

Walderslade Primary School

Dargets Road, Chatham, ME5 8BJ

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The new headteacher and deputy headteacher lead the school well. They have managed to navigate it successfully through recent changes of staffing.
- As a result of a more rigorous approach to improving teaching, the leaders have ensured that pupils' achievement and the school's effectiveness are good. They are still improving.
- Pupils' improved behaviour is now good and underpins their better attitudes to learning. Pupils are proud of awards the school has received for its artistic, sporting and musical achievements.
- The early years provision is effective in supporting children's development in most areas of their learning.
- Teaching is good. Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils of all abilities.
- Pupils read confidently and widely. They know a range of authors and can talk about their favourite types of books.
- The school's effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development results in mature pupils who willingly work together with others. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils are articulate and can explain their point of view clearly. They listen carefully to adults and classmates.
- Safeguarding is high priority. Pupils feel safe and secure. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. The school is a happy place in which to learn.
- Governors are fully involved in monitoring all aspects of the school's work. They are well informed about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Governors hold the staff to account effectively for their impact on pupils' progress.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and its work. The improved website, more regular meetings and use of social media are raising parents' awareness of the school's achievements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not always use their well-developed writing skills sufficiently in other subjects.
- Information technology is not always used effectively to support pupils' learning.
- Teaching does not always ensure that pupils use their investigative mathematical skills in different ways.
- The outdoor area for early years is not big enough to cater for the number of children who need to use it to extend their learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons or part lessons. Four of these observations took place jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspectors listened to pupils read from Years 2 and 6.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, school staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other member, as well as a representative from the local authority. Inspectors also held informal discussions with a number of parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work. They looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, the school’s systems for judging its effectiveness and pupils’ past work in their books and on display.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, inspectors took account of the 69 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered 28 questionnaires completed by teaching and support staff.

Inspection team

Kevin Hodge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Tomkins

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Walderslade is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged, that is, eligible for additional funding from the pupil premium, is below average. This is funding for pupils eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local education authority. As there were fewer than five Year 6 pupils eligible last year for funding, their progress is not reported.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- Since the last inspection, there have been changes in leadership. An executive headteacher temporarily managed the school during the prolonged absence of the previous headteacher. The present headteacher started in April 2014 and the deputy headteacher in September 2014.
- The school fell short of meeting the government's floor standards last year. These set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- The early years provision consists of the school's Nursery and Reception classes. Children attend part time in the Nursery and full time in the Reception class.
- The school has a breakfast club which was included in this inspection.
- There have been changes in teaching staff since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the outside learning area for the early years children so they can more readily develop their learning outside as well as within classrooms.
- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement through the school by:
 - ensuring that teaching extends pupils' mathematical investigative skills effectively
 - helping pupils to extend their good writing skills in other subjects such as history and geography
 - using information technology appropriately to support pupils' learning in a wider variety of ways, particularly in Years 1 to 6.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher, supported by the new deputy headteacher, quickly identified weaknesses in the quality of teaching. They have introduced a culture where effective procedures have successfully improved the quality of teaching to good levels and improved pupils' behaviour. Parents are more involved in the life of the school and are very pleased with the improvements made, such as better communication between school and home.
- Staff are enthusiastic about the changes that have taken place since the school was last inspected. They say they feel involved in the running of the school and that the school takes their opinions seriously.
- Middle leaders (often those responsible for subjects, aspects of the school or year groups) are starting to make a difference, but some are relatively new to the role so changes have not yet had enough time to take full effect.
- The school makes good use of the primary physical education and sport premium to increase the number of pupils taking part in a wider range of sports. Staff are also more confident in teaching different sporting activities within their day-to-day lessons because of the coaching they have received. Outside experts have also helped to extend pupils' abilities.
- Senior leaders have raised expectations of others in the school. They have set clear guidelines for improved teaching. Weaknesses are quickly identified so that support can be provided. They draw on different sources of evidence to gauge how well teaching is helping pupils to learn. This has resulted in staff that are much clearer about the link between pupils' rate of progress and their salary progression.
- The range of subjects taught is broad and covers subjects from the Great Fire of London to life in Ancient Greece. Basic skills are catered for well and cover most areas needed. However, the school has identified that pupils' mathematical investigative skills are not always provided for as effectively as they could be. Planning for activities in the early years is sometimes hindered by the constraints of having a relatively small outside area for children to use.
- The school caters for pupils' musical, artistic and sporting abilities well. New assessment arrangements for the curriculum this year are proving to be successful in identifying pupils who need extra help in their learning.
- Pupils write for a wide range of purposes within their English-based work, although this does not always extend into other subject areas as fully. Younger pupils spoke enthusiastically about their work in Forest School, where pupils spend time learning outside. Older pupils also spoke about how much they liked having extra lessons from staff in local secondary schools to help boost their learning to much higher levels than those often expected in primary schools.
- Routines to make sure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress are effective, particularly in providing for pupils' social, emotional or physical needs. Their academic achievement has also improved since the last inspection.
- The local authority has provided good support to the school as it has sought to improve quickly. Outside professional help to support work in English and mathematics has resulted in rapid improvements to the way pupils learn in these subjects. Links with other schools further afield help to develop the roles of middle leaders.
- Although the progress of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is not reported, nonetheless the school is vigilant to ensure that these pupils achieve as well as they can, and that funds are used effectively.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and tackles discrimination effectively. For example, staff take positive steps to widen pupils' understanding of different cultures and help to prepare pupils very well for life in modern Britain. Visitors have shared the principles of Islam, for example. Topical issues or dilemmas are posed to pupils through their 'think' board, where they often record telling thoughts and opinions.
- There is a clear commitment to ensure equality of opportunity. All pupils, whatever their ability or background, have the chance to take part in all the school's activities and to achieve well.
- The school takes safeguarding seriously and ensures that checks on staffing are rigorous and meet current requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body fulfils its duties well. Its policies and routines are well organised and up to date. Governors increasingly provide a higher level of challenge, which supports the school's drive to improve rapidly. They visit regularly and provide reports of what they have seen. Governors understand the

school's performance information and how well results compare with other schools locally and nationally.

- The governing body receives regular reports about the quality of teaching. School leaders keep the governors up to date about what is happening in school and how they are managing teachers' performance. Consequently, the governors know what the school is doing to improve teaching. They ensure a clear link exists between pay and pupils' performance. They have supported senior leaders effectively in dealing with underperformance.
- The governing body monitors the spending of the school's finances closely, including the pupil premium and sport funding, to ensure that pupils benefit from the additional available funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is typically good. Pupils are mature and sensible. They are very confident in discussing their views with others, including adults, as well as fellow pupils. They are interested in what others have to say and polite when others respond to questions.
- Pupils say they like the range of responsibilities they have, including as members of the school council or house captains. Others say they like being in charge of the weekly shop or being part of the 'Green team' keeping the school tidy. Some say that they like being buddies to younger pupils and helping them to develop different games at playtimes.
- Pupils say that low-level disruption within lessons has now all but been eliminated. Parents agree that pupils' behaviour is generally good, although pupils recognise that occasionally the behaviour of some individuals falls short of the school's expectations.
- Pupils respect the differing backgrounds and beliefs of others represented in the school. They understand that pupils in different parts of the country may have quite different views or experiences to their own. This understanding is often gained through the media, rather than through any first-hand experiences or links with other schools.
- The new routines to reward good behaviour are liked by pupils. They say that these make the school's expectations clear and that they appreciate being recognised in newsletters or assemblies for their termly achievements or consistently good behaviour.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say that bullying is relatively rare. They feel safe and recognise that the school quickly deals with any incidents that might unsettle them or cause concern. Pupils know about different forms of bullying. They are very clear about using computers safely and can recall the school's simple system and guidelines for staying safe when using the internet.
- All staff are vigilant to keep pupils as safe as they can be. There are high levels of supervision at playtimes and lunchtimes, and when pupils are moving around the school.
- Welfare arrangements in the early years are well developed to ensure that the youngest children are kept safe. Parents are involved in the process of ensuring that children arrive or leave the early years safely in the morning or when going home. A 'walking bus' operates which has won local awards for its work in helping pupils attend school safely.
- The breakfast club provides a safe, healthy and social start to the day. Parents, carers and pupils appreciate this provision. It has helped to improve attendance and punctuality for some pupils who found it difficult to attend school regularly or who did not have a nutritious start to the day.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now typically good throughout the school. Additional training and support by senior leaders have improved teachers' skills quickly. Visits to lessons and past work seen in pupils' books across the school show that the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills has improved to consistently good levels.
- The school teaches reading effectively. The good teaching of phonics (sounds linked to letters) has ensured that pupils develop key reading skills quickly. The most-able readers read complex texts and those who find reading more difficult are taught how to sound out unfamiliar words. Teaching promotes

pupils' enjoyment of reading well and often manages to combine it with writing. For example, older pupils enjoyed developing their writing skills in different ways, including using a class reading book to stimulate their ideas and thoughts.

- Teachers work closely and effectively with skilled teaching assistants to make sure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are fully included in, and benefit from, all classroom activities.
- Teachers regularly provide pupils with mathematical tasks. As a result, most pupils are confident to work out simple and more complex number problems. Many pupils are able to explain how they work out different number problems, such as 'chunking' numbers or using number lines to check answers. Teaching is not always as effective at helping pupils to apply their skills in a wide variety of ways, including through investigations. Activities where older pupils teach mathematical skills to younger pupils are popular and effectively help learning.
- Teachers insist that pupils present their work very well and this improves as children move through the school. This ensures that by the time they leave, they present and lay out their work very neatly, particularly in their English and mathematical work.
- Although pupils said that they use computers and other information technology, there are occasions when they do not benefit from using the equipment available to enhance their learning. The school has plans to increase the amount of resources available to aid pupils' learning further.
- Teachers assess and mark pupils' work regularly. Pupils particularly like the school's system of having 'pink to think', 'green for good' and the school has plans to use 'purple to polish' as the next step in giving pupils guidance about how to improve their work further.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils now make good progress from their different starting points. Results in national tests for Year 6 pupils dipped to below average last year. Senior leaders quickly identified the reasons and took urgent steps to make sure it did not happen this year. Past work and current checks on pupils' progress in reading, mathematics and writing typically indicate that pupils are on course to reach above average levels this year in both Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils speak confidently and clearly. They enjoy explaining to visitors what they like to do in the school, its best features and how they have been successful in various competitions recently. They listen very carefully to each other, staff and visitors.
- In mathematics, pupils are consistently accurate in their calculation skills, such as long division or multiplication. They also know how to work out the area of shapes and solve simple and more complex word-based problems. Although pupils are generally reaching levels that are above those expected, they are not always confident in knowing how their skills can be used in different ways.
- A focus to improve pupils' writing skills has been successful in getting them to write in different ways and at greater length. Work is presented to a high standard. Pupils are normally enthusiastic to write. For example, pupils in Year 2 were keen to write down the reasons why an imaginary dinosaur might have visited the school during the previous night.
- In other subjects, pupils use their writing skills to some extent, but the length and quality of their writing is not always as good as it is in English lessons.
- The most-able pupils generally achieve well, and this is particularly reflected in pupils' work since the beginning of the year and in their current progress. For example, a higher proportion of pupils in Year 6 are on track to reach levels in national tests which are more like those reached in secondary schools. The most-able pupils in Year 2 achieve well and are on track to improve upon their results this year.
- The few pupils who are eligible for additional pupil premium funding achieve well, although their specific attainment and rates of progress are not reported as there were fewer than five Year 6 pupils eligible for funding last year.
- The relatively few disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well and are closing the gap with others nationally. Their social, emotional and physical needs are particularly well catered for and pupils say they like using their new 'dream hub' to help them think and be calm. Increasingly, support from outside professionals and activities matched to their needs ensure that their academic abilities are catered for equally well.
- Pupils read widely and enthusiastically. They recall the names of favourite authors, enjoy reading and like using the school library. Year 1 pupils reached above average levels in the national phonics screening check last year, reflecting their confidence in reading and spelling unfamiliar words.
- Pupils achieve particularly well at a variety of sports and are successful when competing against other schools. Younger pupils also enjoy learning about the outside environment through their Forest School activities.

- Nursery and Reception class children often join the school with number and language skills that are below those typical for their age. Through good teaching, they achieve well from their individual starting points, particularly in their social and emotional development. They enjoy playing together and quickly learn their early reading, writing and speaking skills quickly.

The early years provision

is good

- Children achieve well during the early years in the Nursery and Reception class. Children make good progress so that many achieve a good level of development or better by the end of the year. This ensures children are ready for their start in Year 1.
- The school is good at extending children's experiences beyond the classroom to enhance their interests and experiences. For example, children visited a wildlife park during the inspection and were eager to talk, paint and write about their experiences.
- Good leadership and the teachers' effective planning of children's learning make sure that the well-equipped indoor facilities stimulate children's interest and promote effective learning. The outdoor area is not very big and makes more adventurous or physical-based activities less easy to plan.
- Teaching is good and focused on a clear understanding of children's needs. As a result, children make good progress. Attractive learning journals (records kept by staff and parents alike) record children's ongoing achievements. They are kept up to date.
- Activities teach early reading and writing skills well. Children are confident at sounding out unfamiliar words. Attractive displays and resources encourage children's early number skills to develop, as well as their artistic and modelling skills.
- Children's behaviour is good. They settle quickly into their daily routines and form excellent relationships with adults and each other. They are polite to adults and work well together. Staff create a caring and positive environment where children feel happy and secure.
- Children's health, safety and well-being are provided for carefully. All children are kept safe. Parents agree that their children get a good start to school.

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	462396
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Chappell
Headteacher	Paul Dadson
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 June 2013
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