

# Inspection of Walderslade Girls' School

Bradfields Avenue, Walderslade, Chatham, Kent ME5 0LE

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Inspection dates: 3–4 December 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Walderslade girls are proud of their school and give a warm welcome to visitors. Pupils enjoy taking on extra responsibilities such as those of student mentors, charity representatives or prefects. The letters in the school's motto, 'employ me', stand for the names of the skills pupils need to develop to get on well in adult life. Pupils understand what these skills are and use them well in many lessons.

School leaders set high standards which they expect pupils to follow. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the site. Teachers and the pastoral team know their pupils well. If pupils fall out with each other, or have other problems, there are many people who are on hand to help.

Pupils feel safe in the school. Bullying is rare. If it does happen, staff take appropriate steps to stop it. Assemblies and tutor programmes promote respect. Pupils say that they can express their opinions freely, whatever their background. There is a wide choice of clubs and activities. Many girls take part in high-quality performances and the arts are very strong. These activities help pupils grow in confidence when they are at school.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Since the last inspection, leaders have raised the standards that pupils achieve. The chief executive officer, governors and trustees know the school well. They provide informed challenge to senior leaders. New leaders have taken on underperforming subjects and turned them around. In mathematics and science, where historical results were weak, standards are now much higher.

Subject leaders plan curriculum content carefully to build pupils' learning over time. Pupils find it easier to remember more and to understand new ideas. In history, for example, pupils learn about the Black Death in key stage 3. This helps them understand 'medicine through time' in key stage 4. Pupils achieve well because they use their previous learning to guide their thinking. Leaders have introduced assessment methods that are effective and do not overload staff. For example, teachers provide pupils with targeted feedback to help them improve and understand their work. However, in a small number of subjects, teaching does not build pupils' understanding in a logical sequence. This means pupils forget, or do not link, their learning.

Across a range of subjects, teachers' subject knowledge is strong, including in the sixth form. Teachers use their knowledge skilfully to inspire pupils and make them think deeply. For example, in art, Year 10 pupils possess an exceptionally strong understanding of colour. Many want to continue the subject into their adult life.

Leaders make sure pupils study a wide range of subjects. The multi-academy trust brings in specialists to support smaller departments, such as languages. More pupils now choose to take a language at key stage 4 and consequently more take the

subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate.

Sixth-form students enjoy a wide choice of appropriate qualifications. They have high-quality work experience and expert careers guidance. Their programmes of study, including citizenship and healthy living, prepare them well for their next steps. Many sixth-form students go on to higher education or employment.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning and most behave well. The multi-academy trust's 'skills for life' programme helps pupils to see how their learning gives them skills they need as adults. This has increased motivation, because pupils can see the point of what they are studying. Teachers use the school's systems well to deal with any poor behaviour. This means that pupils can learn without disruption from others.

Most pupils attend school regularly. Some girls who transfer into the school later in their secondary school career arrive with poor attendance habits. Staff work hard to get these pupils to attend more often.

Pupils show respect for those who have different values and beliefs. They welcome the chance to help each other and contribute well to the life of the school. The school has a strong programme of visual, creative and performing arts. Pupils gain confidence and character through participation at all ages. Student leadership programmes are strong and popular. Sixth-form students have a high profile. For example, the head girl and her deputy represent pupils well in discussions with senior leaders.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. They give examples of how they are helped to do well, such as through additional reading classes. Specialist staff are knowledgeable. Pupils with SEND achieve well and many continue into the school's sixth-form.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding checks are completed very thoroughly and supervised by the multi-academy trust. The culture of safeguarding is strong from governors down to pupils. Staff at all levels know exactly what their responsibilities are and could give examples of how they discharge them regularly.

The designated safeguarding lead is fully trained and diligent. She has six deputies who maintain a very high profile in the school. Pupils and staff know who is in the safeguarding team and use its advice frequently. Pupils feel very well supported. One girl explained how the team understands the problems she and her friends face. She told us: 'They're on it!'

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

## **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Changes made by leaders since the last inspection have transformed the way that teachers organise the curriculum. However, there is still some work to do to ensure that all departments plan and organise pupils' learning equally well. Leaders need to make sure that sequences of lessons help pupils to know, remember and understand more in all subjects.
- In recent years, leaders have worked with families to raise pupils' attendance. However, a small group of pupils are still absent too frequently. Leaders and governors must ensure that these pupils are supported to attend school more regularly.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137630
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	10111415
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive (non-selective)
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Gender of students in sixth-form provision</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	864
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	110
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Susan Greenfield
<b>Headteacher</b>	Fraser Campbell
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sflt.org.uk/waldersladegirls">www.sflt.org.uk/waldersladegirls</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12–13 September 2017

## Information about this school

- In September 2018, Walderslade Girls' School joined the Skills for Life multi-academy trust.
- The school sends a small number of pupils to three off-site alternative providers for part of their school week. These providers are Mid-Kent College, Rivermead Routes to Reintegration and Squirrels Riding School.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- As part of this inspection, we met the headteacher, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, governors and trustees, senior and departmental leaders

and a selection of teaching and support staff. We also met different groups of pupils to hear about their experiences of the school.

- We looked at safeguarding records, including the recruitment checks that the school makes, and the quality of referrals school leaders make to other agencies. We spoke to representatives from the alternative providers used by the school.
- We considered 36 survey results from parents in Ofsted Parent View, 24 pupil questionnaires and 60 staff surveys.
- We looked in detail at the school's documentation and information from its website. This included leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, as well as their action plans and policies. We scrutinised national published information about pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour.
- We did deep dives in English, mathematics, science, history, modern foreign languages, art and performing arts. We talked to leaders and teachers about how they planned the curriculum and delivered it. We then visited lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at the work they produced. We also looked at the work of the sixth form.

### **Inspection team**

Keith Pailthorpe, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Roessler	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Murphy	Ofsted Inspector
Suzanne Richards	Ofsted Inspector

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