



# Warden House Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 118390  
**Local Authority** Kent  
**Inspection number** 291120  
**Inspection dates** 7–8 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Selwyn Ward

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Birdwood Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Community		Deal
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		CT14 9SF
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01304 375040
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	394	<b>Fax number</b>	01304 371707
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Eberlein
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Graham Stabbs
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 June 2002		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger-than-average school has two classes for each year group. It includes a wide range of extended services, including a breakfast and after-school club as well as holiday activities for its pupils. Additional support is provided for families with social problems. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The average standards attained in the Year 6 national tests represent satisfactory achievement. They show that the school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. This school is fast improving, however, and a great many features are now good. The curriculum is good because it brings different subjects together to help make learning relevant and fun. Thanks to this, and a diet of good teaching, pupils are making good progress in lessons. This has not always been the case in the past, when the school's tracking data shows that pupils made much less progress in some classes than in others. As a parent perceptively put it, their child had 'had ups and downs with their learning,' with 'great progress in some years but not a lot in others'. This will be a good school when the now much more consistently good progress in lessons is sustained and demonstrated through improved national test scores.

The most striking feature of this school is the pupils' outstanding personal development. This starts in the Reception classes. Although overall standards by the start of Year 1 remain below expectations, children make particularly good progress in their personal and social development, quickly learning the school's orderly routines. Parents particularly commend the school's effectiveness in raising pupils' self-esteem, describing the school as 'very good in building children's confidence and teaching them independence'. This results in children wanting to learn and do well, so they behave very well and work hard in lessons. The school has achieved this success through its exceptionally strong care, guidance and support. Virtually all pupils describe the school as 'caring and welcoming' where they are made to feel safe and secure. Pupils also benefit from the very strong partnership that the school has developed with their parents. Families are kept very well informed and many benefit from the range of extended services provided, including the breakfast and after-school clubs. As one parent wrote, 'Without this safe facility, I would struggle to balance working life with parenthood'.

Pupils with learning difficulties are especially well supported by knowledgeable teaching assistants who work in close partnership with class teachers. This enables these pupils to make particularly good progress. It is the most able pupils who have not always done as well as they could. This has been recognised by the school, with a more concerted effort now being made to match work in lessons to pupils' different abilities. Although there are notable opportunities for pupils who show a gift for art or music, not enough is done to swiftly identify all those pupils who are gifted and talented so that they can benefit from appropriately tailored provision.

The significant improvements seen in the school are a tribute to its good leadership and management. A parent describes how the headteacher 'devotes all his efforts into making each individual child feel very important'. The headteacher and school leaders have been equally effective at building a staff team with a shared commitment to school improvement. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and is used effectively to adapt and develop provision. For example, grouping pupils into ability sets in mathematics was found to work and so has been extended to other subjects. The school has amply demonstrated its good capacity to continue to improve.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the good progress that pupils are now making in lessons is sustained and translated into improved results in the national tests.
- Put in place more comprehensive systems for identifying and providing for gifted and talented pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Children start school with below-average skills, particularly in speech and language. By the end of the Reception Year, they are still below the expected levels for their age, but they achieve particularly well in their social development. Standards in the national assessments in Year 2 have varied but they have been below average in recent years. In the national tests taken in Year 6, standards have been broadly average. This represents satisfactory achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties do well because they are well supported in lessons. However, more-able pupils have not always achieved as well as they could because they have not always been set challenging enough work. The school has recognised this and has taken steps to raise these pupils' attainment. Teachers are now increasingly matching work more closely to pupils' ability and this has already resulted in better progress being made in lessons. Nevertheless, the school is still not identifying all its gifted and talented pupils early enough to provide specifically for them.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school because 'Teachers make the work fun'. One parent described how 'On the rare occasion when my daughter is ill, we have temper tantrums because she does not want to stay at home'. Pupils' enthusiasm for school is reflected in their good attendance and punctuality. Pupils feel safe and secure. This allows them to grow in confidence and to enjoy lessons. Behaviour around the school and in lessons is very good which, pupils say, sometimes contrasts with their behaviour outside of school! Within school, pupils are polite, considerate and respectful. They know how to work and play safely. Older pupils are involved in helping others by being trained as 'Buddies' to support younger or lonely pupils in making friends.

All pupils appreciate the importance of a healthy diet and the need for regular exercise. They are keen to attend the wide range of extra-curricular activities, especially in sport and arts. They appreciate the responsibility given by their membership of the school council. They are proud of the changes they have helped to make. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their future economic well-being because their key literacy and numeracy skills are sound.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Lessons are well planned to build on what pupils have learnt before. This means that work in lessons is matched more closely than it has been in the past to pupils' different abilities. Teachers get on very well with their pupils, which helps to motivate them so that they want to learn. Teachers generally explain their expectations clearly at the start of each lesson, although sometimes this better identifies the tasks that pupils are to carry out rather than what pupils are expected to learn. A particular success of teaching is that teachers increasingly make learning fun by making good use of interactive whiteboards and by imaginatively linking subjects together. For example, pupils working with Ordnance Survey maps in geography to determine routes draw on their literacy work on writing instructions and numeracy skills to calculate distance. On those occasions where learning is satisfactory rather than good, it is because teachers do not expect enough of their pupils. In these lessons, too long is allowed for some tasks so that the pace of learning slows.

Very good marking in literacy shows pupils how well they are doing and how they can do better. In other subjects, the quality of marking varies considerably. In some subjects, work is merely ticked to acknowledge it has been completed.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school is increasingly developing links between subjects to make topics interesting and relevant to the pupils. Pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy is being boosted through their work in other subjects. Setting by ability in mathematics and English has helped teachers to plan accurately to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Having found that it works, the school has extended setting to science in Year 6 and phonics in Years 1 to 3. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to learn French in Years 3 to 6 and to receive sports coaching from the specialist teachers who visit regularly from the local secondary school.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of popular clubs and other extra-curricular provision, including those run as part of the extended schools provision. Pupils are selected by ability for participation in the art club. The school has generally, however, been slow to recognise and provide specifically for its gifted and talented pupils, which has contributed to some more able pupils not always having done as well as they could.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding because pupils are so well cared for and supported. Pupils get on very well with their teachers and other adults and this contributes to what parents describe as 'a very friendly, caring school atmosphere'.

Teachers encourage pupils to listen to and respect each other and to show initiative and independence. As part of its extended provision, the school offers strong support to families, for example, through encouraging parental involvement in healthy eating initiatives. The school is a very inclusive school which places strong emphasis on catering for individual need. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties are especially well supported, often drawing very effectively on the assistance of outside agencies. This helps these pupils to make good progress. All pupils have clear targets in English and mathematics that show them what they need to do to improve their work. This is contributing to the better progress they are now making.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Strong recent improvements have followed from the reorganisation of senior management. The headteacher and senior managers have together succeeded in forging an effective staff team with a shared vision to provide the best for their pupils and an enthusiastic commitment to school improvement. This has always been a school where pupils feel valued. The school has now seized the challenge to raise academic achievement as well as it has pupils' personal development, although it recognises that more could be done to identify and support gifted and talented pupils. Teaching is monitored well against agreed criteria that emphasise learning. This has resulted in better awareness of successful teaching methods and has helped to ensure that pupils in each of the classes in every year group gain a consistent experience of learning. Governors are keen and knowledgeable. They provide good support and challenge to the school, contributing well to the identification of needs and to forward planning.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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	2
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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us.

Here are the things that we think are best about your school:

- This is a well-run school where things are getting better. Although children haven't always done as well as they could in the past, you are now making good progress because the teaching is good.
- You are all learning to become confident young people who are keen to learn and do well.
- The school looks after you really well and makes it a happy place for you to be.
- You are given lots of interesting things to do and that helps make lessons fun.

These are the things that we think could be better:

- We want you to do as well in the tests you take in the summer as you are now doing in class.
- The school needs to do more to spot those of you who are especially talented to make sure that it caters fully for your needs.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.