

# Walderslade Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118321
<b>Local Authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	312885
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	208
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Elaine Steer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Angela Milne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 July 2003
<b>School address</b>	Dargets Road Walderslade Chatham ME5 8BJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 861660
<b>Fax number</b>	01634 869488

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and particularly investigated the impact of measures taken to improve standards, any variation in provision between key stages, and pupils' performance in science. Parts of some lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including self-evaluation, was scrutinised. The inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

In this average size school, there is an average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. The headteacher was appointed in January 2006. The school operates a breakfast club for part of the week.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. Although it is located entirely in hutted accommodation on a cramped site, staff succeed in making the most of the resources that they have. The school's aims state, 'Above all we want children to achieve, be happy and to make a contribution to the community in which they live.' School leaders have been successful in achieving these aims.

Following a sound start in the Foundation Stage, good teaching enables pupils to make rapid progress in Years 1 and 2 to reach above average standards in the Year 2 assessments. Pupils achieve well overall, so that standards at the end of Year 6 are above average, preparing pupils well for the next stage of their education. It was just in science where standards dipped in 2007; they were average. Although almost all the pupils attained the nationally expected level, fewer attained the higher Level 5 in science than in English and mathematics. This is a reverse of the picture in most schools, where it is more common for pupils to outperform other subjects in the science tests. More able pupils do not all do as well as they could in science because often all pupils do the same work in lessons in this and some other subjects. That means that more able pupils are not challenged enough. This is also a factor that limits progress in the Foundation Stage.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers know and get on well with their pupils, so that pupils readily cite 'the teachers' as one of the very best things about the school. Lessons are frequently well paced so that pupils get a lot of work done in the time available. Teaching assistants give good support to those pupils who need extra help, including those with learning difficulties, and this enables those pupils to make similar progress to others in the class, even in those lessons where work is not closely matched to pupils' different capabilities. Although teachers routinely start lessons with an explanation of their purpose, often these 'learning objectives' are too broad to enable pupils to evaluate for themselves whether or not they have succeeded in achieving them. Sometimes the objectives set out not what is to be learned but merely the tasks to be carried out. Where this occurs it limits opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning, a focus which has been set by school leaders as one of their key priorities.

Pupils and their parents alike consider Walderslade to be 'a happy school', and this contributes to pupils' good personal development. Pupils say how much they enjoy coming to school and they take part with enthusiasm in lessons, and in the very good range of after-school clubs. These features contribute to a good curriculum where topics are imaginatively linked to help make learning more interesting and relevant. For example, literacy work on note-taking skills in Year 3 was linked to the class topic on myths and legends as they focused on the key points to record in the teacher's recounting of the story of Perseus. Pupils have a good understanding of the need for healthy diets and they proudly take part in a range of sports activities that is remarkable for a school of this size. With swimming lessons that begin in the Reception Year, every child learns to swim by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. The promise of the opportunity in Year 6 to learn to sail offers a further fillip to pupils' development of this important safety skill. Pupils feel safe too because their welfare is catered for well during their time at the school. As a parent explained, 'The children are aware of the behaviour expected of them and the consequences of not following the rules. They are encouraged to make assessments of any wrongdoings and consider the effects of their actions on others.' As a result, behaviour is very good. Although one of the responsibilities that older pupils can take on is as a 'bully buster', bullying is a rarity, so this can be something of a sinecure.

Several parents refer to the 'strong community spirit' which is very evident in the way pupils keenly take on responsibilities, for example as school councillors, house captains or members of the 'green team' helping to look after the local environment. Older pupils help younger ones, for example with playground games. Pupils are also helped to develop a keen interest in the wider community. The choir, for example, sings for local old folk, and pupils have visited a church, synagogue, mosque and gurdwara as part of their religious education. In turn, this contributes to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The school owes much of its success to its good governance, leadership and management. Though some of those with subject leadership responsibilities are new to role, the headteacher, governors and leadership team have been particularly effective in identifying where improvements have been needed. They identified, for example, that pupils had not always in the past made good progress in Years 1 and 2 and so put in place measures which have shown through in raised standards. They have brought in extra local authority support for staff in the Foundation Stage to help get pupils off to a brisker start in their first year at school. These measures illustrate the school's good capacity for further improvement. A particular strength of the school is in the way school leaders and other staff carefully analyse how well each pupil is doing, so that extra support can be put in place for any child at risk of falling behind. Pupils all have, know and refer to individual targets in English and mathematics, so that they and their parents know how they can move their work on.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

Children start school with capabilities generally in line with those expected of 4-year-olds. They make satisfactory progress so that, by the end of the Reception Year, most are working securely within the early learning goals expected of children this age. Parents are particularly pleased at the way the school helps their children to settle but several said, 'Children are not challenged enough.' This largely mirrors the school's own view. It has correctly identified that more able children have not always made as much progress as they could because some of their work is not demanding enough.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Better match work to pupils' different abilities so that able pupils are challenged to the full, especially in the Foundation Stage and in science.
- Ensure that the objectives set out for lessons show pupils clearly what it is they are expected to learn so that they can take more responsibility for evaluating their own progress.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

### The quality of provision

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

<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.

## Annex A

**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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Walderslade Primary School, Chatham ME5 8BJ

Thank you for making me welcome today, and particularly those who helped me on my brief visit. I could see how proud you are of your school. You have every right to be because Walderslade is a good school. It is well run and it takes good care of you.

I was pleased to see how keen you are in lessons and when taking on jobs in the school. It was good to hear though that the 'bully busters' have so little to do! You told me how helpful the teachers were and how they found lots of interesting activities for you to do. You particularly like the various trips, and many of you enjoy the many sports and other clubs on offer.

The teaching in the school is good and helping you to make good progress. Some of you could be doing still better though. The work is sometimes too easy for some of you, so I have asked the school to make sure you are all set work that keeps you on your toes. I think this is particularly needed in science and for the youngest children when they start school.

You all have targets that help you to improve your work, and that is a good feature of the school. I know that the school wants to see you all even more involved in checking for yourselves how well you are doing. To help with that, I have asked teachers to take special care to ensure that they give you a clearer idea at the start of lessons of what it is they want you to learn. That way, you will be able to tell more easily whether or not the lesson was successful.

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

Best wishes Selwyn Ward Lead inspector