

Warden House Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118390
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339212
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Sheila Browning

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	387
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Toby Grundon
Headteacher	Graham Chisnell
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and held meetings with governors, members of staff, pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation, including the self-evaluation form, safeguarding and other policy documents, the school improvement plan and records of pupils' progress. They also took into account the views of parents, pupils and staff expressed in questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of measures to accelerate pupils' attainment, particularly in writing
- how well teachers convey high expectations, provide quality guidance in marking and use assessment information to modify their teaching
- the extent of pupils' appreciation of those with differing backgrounds and cultures represented nationally and globally
- the robustness of leadership at all levels in improving teaching and learning and pupils' achievement.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average school. Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities is much higher than the national average, with most having moderate learning, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in two Reception classes. The school shares the site with an independent nursery setting, with which it has close links. The school manages a breakfast and after-school club as well as holiday activities for its pupils. The school has been recognised for its contribution to the community. The school has experienced some significant staffing changes over recent years including at senior level. In April 2009, a new headteacher was appointed to the school. A new chair of governors was appointed in February 2009 and both staffing and governors' responsibilities have been restructured.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Warden House Primary provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Parents are very appreciative of the good care, guidance and support given to their children. Consequently, pupils are nurtured well and enjoy all aspects of school life. This is reflected in their good attendance, behaviour and positive learning attitudes. Extended school activities, breakfast and after-school clubs are wide ranging and very popular. The school's aims, 'Be safe, Be kind, Be careful, Be happy', underpin and support pupils' good personal development and the expectations of Every Child Matters guidance effectively. The school is now poised to move forward more strongly with a 'fired-up' staff as a result of strong and clear leadership from the headteacher. Staff and governors share his commitment, drive and determination to school improvement. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate and leadership is focused on remedying areas of weaknesses in teaching, other provision and outcomes. The school's management, checking systems and procedures have been reviewed and tightened, and standards are rising. Several improvements such as in pupils' attainment, teaching and learning are recent, which is why leadership and management and the school's capacity to improve are satisfactory rather than good.

Children in the Reception classes get off to a satisfactory start. Smooth induction arrangements ensure they settle quickly to learning routines. They make satisfactory progress in many aspects of their learning, though key skills in communication, language and literacy, and their knowledge of the world and creative development, remain below expected standards for their age by the start of Year 1. By the time they leave school, pupils make satisfactory progress to reach broadly average standards in their academic work, although their writing skills lag behind. Checks on pupils' current progress indicate they are on course to improve further this year. While pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress, those more able are not consistently stretched to reach their full potential. Teaching has improved because teachers' expectations are higher, but is typically satisfactory because teachers do not consistently use assessment information to set challenging tasks. Marking for improvement, although regular, remains too variable in quality, which hinders pupils' faster progress. The curriculum is relevant and developing cross-curricular learning experiences helps pupils to build on their basic skills. Pupils make a good contribution both within the school and the local community through events and involvement such as developing the Rainbow Park project. Pupils' knowledge of the range of cultures and beliefs found nationally and globally are weaker aspects of their understanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Increase the pupils' rate of progress from satisfactory to good in English, mathematics and science throughout the school by:
 - ensuring that teaching activities consistently challenge the more able
 - making sure learning tasks take account of pupils' prior attainment and individual needs more precisely to set challenging tasks.
- Ensure teaching is consistently good or better in raising expectations and challenge, especially in writing, by:
 - sharing and adopting good teaching practices throughout the school
 - providing more learning opportunities across subjects, especially in writing, that use relevant and interesting experiences
 - making sure marking of pupils' work clearly points to what they need to do to improve their work.
- Strengthen pupils' awareness of those people who have different beliefs and backgrounds represented in the United Kingdom and further afield by:
 - developing links with a contrasting school so that pupils can gain some first-hand experience of meeting pupils from different cultures in the United Kingdom
 - extending opportunities for pupils to learn and understand about people's different beliefs, cultures and backgrounds around the world.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' behaviour is good and pupils say 'Breathing Space' helps them to be calm and take greater responsibility for their own behaviour. Many parents, pupils and staff confirmed that behaviour was good and said it had improved. Pupils enjoy school and their good attendance reflects this. Many participate and enjoy a wide range of activities from gardening to golf. Pupils settle quickly to learning tasks and work hard independently and in small groups. Pupils eagerly told inspectors about their 'green gang' and the recent firework display. They have an excellent understanding of the importance of leading healthy lifestyles and choose to eat free fruit daily. They loved 'wake up and shake up' and this week's multi-skills and athletics workshops, and enjoy responsibilities such as running the playtime games shop and being 'buddies'. They raise funds for charities and during noise awareness week school council members met with staff to discuss ideas to make lunch in the hall more enjoyable and less noisy. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultural traditions and the school has plans to extend their experiences of meeting and mixing with people from a range of cultural backgrounds. This contributes satisfactorily to pupils' satisfactory spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Results in recent Year 6 national tests have varied but the downward trend in years has been reversed because the school has tackled the underlying causes of previous underperformance effectively. The latest results in Years 2 and 6 were close to national standards and currently pupils are on track to reach higher standards. Progress was

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satisfactory in the lessons seen and work in pupils' books showed it to be accelerating, although in writing this is less marked than in other areas. Most noticeable are improvements in reading. Pupils are now making up for 'lost ground' as a result of recent improvements in teaching and learning, and the curriculum. There is no significant variation in the progress of different groups, though more could be done to consistently challenge more able pupils. More accurate identification of pupils with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities and targeted support now ensure they make the progress they should.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory, but is an improving picture as inspectors observed a number of lessons where teaching was good. Effective use of information and communication technology to support learning, combined with better cross-curricular links, are enriching pupils' learning experiences. Pupils particularly enjoy lessons and their learning improves when lessons maintain a good pace and they are actively engaged. For example, Year 2 pupils were encouraged to choose which mathematical problems they wanted to solve

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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and confidently did so. Pupils know their targets. Self-assessment and teachers' marking are beginning to help them identify how well they are doing and to know how to improve their work, particularly in writing, but this is inconsistent. There are still weaknesses in the way that pupils are challenged to improve their standards, especially in writing and ensuring more able pupils always do as well as they can.

The curriculum is adequately matched to pupils' needs. In recognition of its work, the school has gained several awards, including a silver French award. Opportunities for writing are becoming more meaningful and challenging, especially when learning is linked to real-life experiences, but this not sufficiently well developed. 'Writers of the week' and 'Mighty Maths Awards' celebrate pupils' achievements well. Pupils enjoy topic work which promotes a good balance of different subjects and skills, as in science, history and information and communication technology. Year 6 pupils, for example, made circuit boards for a sound system to alert them of oncoming enemies as part of their Second World War topic. The greater emphasis placed on developing pupils' reading skills is also lifting pupils' writing skills. The strong focus given to pupils' personal development and well-being is securing pupils' confidence. They showed great empathy in a very moving Year 3 Remembrance Assembly. Many participate in and enjoy the wide range of enrichment and extended school activities that also reflect the strong partnerships forged with local schools. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum continues to improve, with high priority given to children's welfare and parental involvement in their children's learning.

The pastoral care, support and guidance are key strengths. Staff work extremely hard to provide for and support pupils' needs. Strong links with outside agencies and significant family liaison work are having an increasing impact on pupils' learning. Specific and intensive learning programmes support vulnerable pupils well. Transition arrangements are good. While many parents engage well with the school through events such as family days and events, open evenings and excursions, the school is trying hard to engage those 'hard-to-reach' parents who are less involved.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has an ambitious vision leading to improvement and has inspired staff and pupils to strive to do better. Pupils and parents recognise the recent improvements made. Curriculum leaders are enthusiastic and have correctly identified where

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improvement is required. It is, however, too soon for the initiatives to have resulted in sustained higher outcomes. Targets set are now more challenging and regular monitoring of teaching and learning is leading to improvements. The governing body has been through a period of turbulence, but is now in a position to offer the school support and challenge. They are not yet advanced in their plans across all strands of community cohesion. Strengths lie within the school and its immediate community. Their success in promoting community cohesion further afield is developing. One good example is the residential trip and French rugby tournament held in Calais. Leadership is focused on the need to ensure a more consistent level of good teaching or better across all classes. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate and senior leaders monitor the school's work rigorously. Staff now know that they are accountable. The inclusion and safety of pupils has high priority and robust safeguarding procedures are in place. Practices for promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination are only satisfactory as pupils' higher attainment is not yet sustained or significantly embedded.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

From their starting points, which are lower than expected for their age, children make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning. By the end of the Reception Year, their standards are below average. Good induction systems and good parental involvement reflect the strong focus on children's welfare. For example, scrap books have been sent home to encourage parents to be involved in developmental learning with their child to connect learning at home and at school. The learning environment is improving and is

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well organised and children can freely flow indoors and out to learn. A new assessment programme has led to matching planning to work to ensure children make the best progress into Year 1. This has resulted in more opportunities for writing and an increased interest in boys' writing. However, this is work in progress and further enrichment is required to prepare children for writing. Additionally, the teaching of blending of letters and sounds has led to improved progress, including for vulnerable groups. Leadership and management are satisfactory and show a satisfactory understanding of the learning requirements of young children. Nonetheless, more needs to be done to ensure learning is always stimulating and vibrant with increased opportunities for role play so that children's imagination, creativity and enquiry skills are captured in readiness for writing.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Overall, the very large majority of parents are satisfied with the school. In two of the areas surveyed, concerning the way in which the school deals with unacceptable pupil behaviour and takes account of parents' suggestions and concerns, a very small minority were negative. Nearly a quarter of the questionnaires had comments included, the great majority of which were entirely positive. Many expressed how pleased they were with the recent improvements in the school's work and all the positive changes made by the headteacher. There were no common threads in the very few questionnaires containing negative comments. A small minority of pupils and staff in the questionnaire returns disagreed that behaviour was good, but inspectors could find no compelling evidence to support this perception.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Warden House Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 83 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 387 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	64	26	31	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	45	54	37	45	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	45	54	32	39	5	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	55	31	37	5	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	54	65	26	31	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	55	30	36	6	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	59	34	41	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	37	45	35	42	2	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	61	27	32	2	2	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	36	42	51	6	7	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	54	28	34	8	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	42	51	37	45	1	1	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	67	22	26	3	4	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 November 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Warden House School, Deal CT14 9SF

We really enjoyed talking to you. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. Warden House School is providing you with a satisfactory education. We share your view that the care and support you are given by staff is a real strength. Your behaviour is good, you play well together and work hard. Well done! We think your games shop is a great idea! We were very impressed at how much you knew about keeping fit and healthy. You told us about the many recent improvements in your school and how much you enjoyed all the different clubs and activities. Your headteacher, staff and governors work hard and we can see lots of improvements. Teaching is satisfactory and improving. You are making satisfactory progress and most of you are now making better progress than you have recently. You are making up for previous gaps in your learning and attain average standards. We think that some of you, especially those of you who find learning easy, could do even better than you are doing now. We think all of you could do even better in writing. You can help by keeping up the good work.

To maintain your school's improvement, we have asked your headteacher and the staff to:

- help you make better progress in English, mathematics and science by making sure the work you do is always at the right level and teachers use the information about how well you should be doing to set harder work, especially for those of you who find learning easy
- check teachers always expect you to do as well as you can, especially in your writing, and get teachers to share their ideas about what teaching methods work well and make sure you have more 'real-life' experiences and interesting learning opportunities across different subjects to 'fire up' your writing and make sure when teachers mark your work you are clear about what you need to do to improve it
- develop links with schools in this country and further afield to help you find out about children who may have different beliefs, cultures and backgrounds to you.

Yours sincerely,

Sheila Browning

Lead inspector

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