



# Walworth School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 114341  
**Local Authority** Durham  
**Inspection number** 289881  
**Inspection date** 12 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Alastair Younger

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>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Bluebell Way
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Newton Aycliffe, County Durham
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		DL5 7LP
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01325 300194
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	41	<b>Fax number</b>	01325 312735
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Dormer
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Peter Wallbanks
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 January 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This is a day, extended day and residential school for boys and girls with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). Almost all pupils are boys. Many pupils also have additional learning difficulties and disabilities. Many pupils come from disadvantaged homes. Attainment on entry is usually low and often very low. All pupils are White British. Six pupils are looked after by the local authority. The school also manages an outreach service whose role is to facilitate the education of pupils with SEBD in mainstream schools. During the inspection, the residence was closed for refurbishment so no judgement on its effectiveness could be made. Many pupils of all ages join or leave the school other than at the normal time.

## **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. It gives good value for money. The headteacher leads a good staff team well. Parents express great confidence in the school, saying that it is well led and that their children are making good progress and are happy and well looked after. The school provides a high standard of personal and physical care. It is more effective than at the time of the last inspection and has a good capacity to improve further. The outreach service is developing well and meeting with considerable success in keeping as many pupils as possible in mainstream schools and supporting those returning there from Walworth.

It is inappropriate to compare pupils' attainment with national standards because of their learning difficulties and disabilities. All pupils make good progress in relation to the challenging individual targets they are set. Pupils joining the school in Year 1 do so with very little prior learning and are often at a very early stage of personal and social development. Pupils joining later have often had a seriously interrupted education and many have been underachieving for several years prior to their admission. The extent of this is not always clear because systems for measuring and recording it are underdeveloped. Pupils achieve well in science and mathematics. In English, pupils make good progress in reading but writing does not improve as fast.

Teaching is good so pupils achieve well. Teachers are particularly well skilled in managing their classrooms. Staff teams work very effectively and collective effort ensures that there are very few interruptions to learning. Good attention is paid to ensuring that work challenges each individual equally and realistically. In these circumstances, pupils enjoy learning, attend well and make good progress in very safe and settled surroundings. One reason why progress in writing is slower than in other areas is because teachers are not making the best use of computers to help pupils overcome their reluctance to put pen to paper.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' writing skills by making better use of computers and looking at ways that subjects other than English can contribute to the raising of standards in writing.
- Improve systems for identifying and recording what pupils know, understand and can do at the point of admission so as to be able to measure future progress more precisely.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good. From an often very low starting point, pupils of all ages make good progress because they are well taught and their attitudes to work improve. Some pupils, often those who have made the most progress leave before the end of Year 6 to return to mainstream schools. Pupils who have not been thriving in other schools

often replace them. Girls are in a tiny minority. They make the same progress as boys. Pupils in care make similar progress to other pupils but often from a lower starting point. Progress is particularly good in science. Progress in mathematics is good. In English it is satisfactory. Pupils' reading improves considerably but their writing tends not to. Pupils' work shows that many of them have a deep-seated reluctance to write at any length or with sufficient care. The opportunity to address this through more effective use of computers has not been sufficiently explored.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being are good. Young lives are enriched and future prospects improved by pupils' growing understanding of their difficulties and the ways in which they can overcome them. Pupils were seen taking turns to explain one thing that they had done to help them stay safe and one way in which someone else had been kind to them. This captured the good way in which pupils are encouraged to develop spiritual, social and moral awareness. Comments such as: 'I haven't moved from my seat' or 'I stayed calm,' show how well aware pupils are of how small acts can contribute to safety of the classroom. Good cultural awareness is developed through visits to places of significance to their own community and learning about the food, dress and customs of other societies. Parents say their children enjoy school. This contributes to attendance being good. Many pupils stay on after school because they enjoy the extra activities, many of which make a significant contribution to encouraging healthy, active lifestyles. Last year there was a significant increase in the number of short, fixed-term exclusions, mainly because of the extreme misbehaviour of a small minority of pupils. Successful action has been taken and there has been one day fixed term exclusion so far this academic year.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard. Lessons are very carefully planned to ensure that each piece of new work follows on logically from the previous one. This encourages pupils to concentrate because they like it when teachers ask them questions about previous learning and they can show off what they have remembered. Good attention is paid to varying tasks to reflect the different abilities of individuals. In this way, everyone is helped to succeed. Teamwork amongst staff is extremely good. This ensures that individuals needing extra attention, to help them learn or behave, get it. Skilful questioning and subtle hints often help pupils to understand how they can better help themselves rather than being dependent upon adults. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and are improving their computer skills. At the moment though, they are missing opportunities to capitalise

on pupils' interest in computers as a means to improve their writing skills and presentation of work.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. Timetables reflect a good emphasis on promoting literacy, mathematics and other basic skills. A good balance is kept between promoting achievement and personal development. This contributes well to pupils' understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Many interesting and enjoyable activities take learning out of classrooms and into the community. Pupils particularly look forward to visiting the 'Forest School' every two weeks, where they join in enthusiastically in a wide range of outdoor activities closely related to what they are learning in school. Consideration for the community is fostered through occasional projects to improve the local environment and school events, which entertain locals or raise funds for charities. Extended day and residential provision add an extra dimension to the curriculum. Activities are carefully planned and pupils are encouraged to vary their choices. Social development is strongly promoted. The return to mainstream school is promoted well through the work of the outreach team. The success of this work is having a significant impact upon building beneficial links with other schools.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Personal and physical care is outstanding. Thorough measures ensure that pupils are very well safeguarded and protected. Potential risk in activities or situations is carefully assessed to protect against unforeseen accidents. Checks on health and safety are thorough and regular. Regular contact and consultation with parents and other agencies helps the school to offer pupils a highly effective network of support.

New pupils often arrive with incomplete records of what they have achieved in their previous schools. The main emphasis of prior assessment has often been behaviour rather than achievement. Teachers quickly compensate for this by identifying priority targets to be included in individual education plans. Checks to identify gaps in learning and gain more precise information about each pupil's starting point are not sufficiently thorough.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership, management and governance are good. One sign of this is that the school has continued to run smoothly during the long secondment of the headteacher. In this time, the acting headteacher has worked very well with staff to keep raising standards, promote personal development and to plan and implement good improvements. A shared sense of purpose contributes well to high morale and the

school is very successful in recruiting and retaining skilled staff. Self-evaluation is accurate and thorough. It is greatly helped by regular contact with parents and close working with other schools and agencies. The best deal is sought for all pupils. Those who make sufficient progress are quickly identified and helped to return to mainstream schools. Staff are efficiently deployed and work together in effective teams. Governors are very supportive. Several have served for many years during which time the school has gone from a position of weakness to one of high standing in the locality. Governors recognise that they should be contributing more to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

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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>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
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>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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

<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>	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.

## 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	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**

Walworth School

Bluebell Way

Newton Aycliffe

County Durham

DL5 7LP

14 October 2006

Dear Pupils

It was good to see you the other day. I am afraid I couldn't stay long but thank you for making my visit so pleasant.

It was good to see how hard you were working in lessons and how good your behaviour was. I visited every class and thought that teaching was good in all of them. That is the main reason why you are making good progress. It is a shame that the residence was closed during my visit but you told me it was good and I could see that the extra activities after school are very popular. I am pretty sure you realise how well you are looked after. That explains why the school seems so calm.

Looking around, there did not seem many ways in which the school could be improved. It is a good school and well managed. I noticed that the school council felt that more crisps and beans on the menu would be an improvement but something tells me it is not going to happen. What I am hoping for instead is that teachers work out better ways of helping you to improve your writing. Using computers a bit more imaginatively might help. I have also suggested that checks to find out what you already know when you first come to Walworth are a bit more thorough.

Good luck for the future

Alastair Younger

(Lead inspector)