

Madginford Park Junior School

Egremont Road, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 8LH

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Require improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Pupils are making poor progress and their achievement over time is inadequate, particularly in writing and mathematics, and for the most able pupils.
- Teachers do not focus precisely enough on the new learning to take place during lessons. The progression in pupils' knowledge and skills has not been planned clearly enough.
- Pupils are not always required to show that they have understood and acted on the advice given by teachers. Consequently, they do not improve as they should.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of are too low.
- Teachers and leaders do not use the information they have about pupils' progress well enough to close gaps in pupils' learning.
- Targets for teachers' performance are not sharp enough to hold them to account for the progress their pupils make.
- Middle leaders are not effective and they are not given sufficient opportunity to manage their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders and managers have not adequately addressed the issues identified in the previous inspection. The governing body does not rigorously hold the school to account.
- The school is not improving rapidly enough and school leaders are not demonstrating that they have the capacity to bring about sustained improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are friendly and welcoming and get on well together. They feel safe and secure.
- Attendance is consistently above average.
- Activities in lessons and extra-curricular activities promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 21 lessons involving all teachers who were teaching during the inspection. A few lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors listened to a sample of Year 3 pupils read and talked to them about how the school helps them to develop their reading skills.
- Meetings were held with school staff, representatives of the governing body and the local authority, and two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including those that show how the school checks on how well it is doing. They considered the school's plans for future development, and information on pupils' progress. They scrutinised pupils' work, information about how the school cares for and protects pupils, records relating to behaviour and attendance and minutes of recent governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took account of 49 responses to the online Parent View survey, and of questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Helen Hutchings, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Madeleine Gerard	Additional Inspector
Janet Warburton	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Madginford Park Junior School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are a small number of pupils from a range of other minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children of service families) has increased over the last three years but is lower than that seen nationally.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above that found in most schools. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better to enable pupils to make at least good progress, by ensuring that:
 - teachers' lesson planning identifies precisely what new knowledge, skills and understanding are to be achieved
 - pupils are clear about the gains they have made in their learning during the lesson
 - the pace of learning is faster and the expectations of what pupils can do in the time given for their tasks are raised
 - pupils understand and act on the advice given in teachers' marking.
- Raise pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics, particularly of the most able pupils, by:
 - using the initial assessment results in Year 3 to identify the gaps in pupils' learning and ensuring that the pupils are given the support they need to address these
 - ensuring that the school plans clearly for the development of pupils' skills and the progression in their learning in writing and mathematics through the school
 - ensuring that work set is challenging enough for individual pupils and groups
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in meaningful contexts in a range of subjects
 - building pupils' self-reliance so that pupils become more confident in their own ability and strengthen their attitudes to learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, so that there is a stronger focus on improving teaching and accelerating pupils' progress, by:
 - using assessment information to identify underachievement more precisely and plan action to bring about improvement
 - sharing existing good practice in teaching
 - ensuring middle managers are able to take more responsibility so that they can be effective in improving their areas

- ensuring that targets for teachers' performance are based on the impact that their work has on pupils' achievement and is linked to pay progression
- ensuring that the governors hold the school rigorously to account.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate because pupils do not make enough progress in writing and mathematics. Consequently, they are not prepared well for their secondary education. The progress made by the most able pupils is also inadequate and too few attain the higher levels in writing and mathematics.
- Attainment in the Key Stage 2 tests has risen since the previous inspection and is now broadly average. However, this does not represent sufficient progress from pupils' above-average starting points in Year 3. Although there was an improvement in 2013, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has been below that found nationally since the previous inspection.
- Pupils make better progress in developing their reading skills than in writing and mathematics. Consequently, their attainment is higher in reading. The most able pupils read confidently and fluently.
- Pupils whose reading skills are weaker on entry are not given the support necessary for them to catch up quickly. For those who do not have a sound grasp of phonics (letters and the sounds they make), the school does not have a sufficiently structured approach to enable them to make progress quickly. Some pupils do not read aloud to adults regularly enough to help them to develop the strategies needed to become more confident readers.
- Pupils' books show that writing skills are not developed systematically. For example, pupils are often asked to concentrate on too many aspects at any one time, such as improving their vocabulary and developing their grammar and punctuation. Consequently, pupils do not have a clear understanding of exactly what would improve their work further.
- In mathematics, evidence in pupils' books and lesson observations shows that too often pupils spend time repeating similar calculations and practising the same skill which reduces the challenge of their work. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their skills to solve problems. Consequently, these skills are underdeveloped.
- Until recently, pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs did not make enough progress from their starting points. As a result, many of these pupils have not made good progress over time. Individual pupils are now closely monitored and the school has a good knowledge of their abilities and of the barriers to their learning. Additional help is now more focused and effective, including programmes run by teaching assistants to address identified difficulties. Links with external agencies are enhancing support for individuals.
- The school is ensuring that most pupils who are supported through the pupil premium funding are closing the gap with other pupils as they move through the school. Consequently, the gap in attainment is being reduced. In 2012, there was a gap of approximately two thirds of a year between this group and their peers in both English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. In 2013, the gap had closed considerably, with less than a third of a year's gap in English, whilst in mathematics the group exceeded the attainment of their peers by a similar amount.
- The additional funding for sports is being used directly to enhance pupils' skills through specialist teaching and coaching, and is increasing the range of extra-curricular sport available for pupils. A high proportion of pupils participate in a wide variety of sports which effectively promotes their physical well-being.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Too many lessons fail to ensure that pupils make sufficient progress. Whilst inspectors did observe some good teaching, including a Year 6 lesson where the teacher encouraged pupils to try things out for themselves, too few lessons enable pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers do not tackle gaps in learning, identified when pupils enter Year 3, quickly enough.
- Teachers' planning does not take sufficient account of what pupils already know and so does not

effectively cater for progression in their knowledge and skills in English and other subjects. Some pupils said that they repeated things in both English and mathematics and that they are capable of doing more difficult work. In other cases, pupils reported that the work given is too hard so that they struggle to make enough progress. The systems in place to monitor the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress have not identified these inconsistencies in teachers' planning.

- In some lessons, teachers' expectations are too low, so that pupils are not sufficiently challenged and do not achieve their potential. For example, in a mathematics lesson seen during the inspection, pupils had to wait when they had finished their work for others to complete their tasks or to gain the attention of the teacher to give them more work.
- In mathematics lessons, teachers use too many repetitive exercises that involve practising skills without a context. There is too little teaching to promote pupils' understanding of principles and concepts so they are securely grasped. Teachers miss opportunities to develop mathematical skills further in meaningful contexts.
- Although a new marking policy has been introduced, it is not implemented consistently by all teachers. Some marking rigorously identifies what pupils have achieved and how work can be improved. However, too few pupils respond to this marking. This is usually because they are not given the opportunity to do so during the school day or the marking does not give them additional ways in which they can demonstrate that they have understood the advice given. In a few cases, marking focuses on correcting skills, such as spelling and presentation, at the expense of giving pupils advice about the overall quality of the content of their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils require improvement

- Behaviour is not good because pupils are heavily dependent on their teacher to tell them what they have to do next, and sometimes their concentration wanes because not enough is expected of them in the time given for their tasks. They do not show sufficient enthusiasm for learning to initiate and find things out for themselves, largely because teaching does not give them enough opportunities to do so.
- Pupils are courteous, friendly and enjoy talking about their work and the things they do in school. Their attitudes to learning are positive and they want to do well. Pupils are willing and compliant with their teachers' instructions and requests in lessons.
- Most parents indicate in their response to the Parent View survey that they feel that the school is a safe place and that pupils are well behaved. Occasional inconsiderate incidents, including bullying or racist comments, occur. These are dealt with effectively by the school and any discrimination tackled quickly so that pupils are confident that their concerns are taken seriously and addressed well. The school has not had to exclude any pupils for a number of years.
- Pupils are taught about dangers they may face, so that they have a good awareness of what to do to avoid such situations. For example, they know about how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Road safety and cycling proficiency sessions give them the confidence to act safely.
- There are relatively few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility to develop their leadership skills.
- Attendance is consistently above average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of many of the things pupils do in school. For example, they particularly enjoy the frequent visitors to the school and the wide range of visits linked to the curriculum, such as building shelters in a local forest and a visit to France.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The leadership of the school has not been effective in improving pupils' achievement and addressing the issues raised at the time of the previous inspection. Although changes have been made in the last year to strengthen senior leadership, the pace of change is slow. The school

does not currently demonstrate the capacity to secure the necessary rapid improvement.

- The school collects a range of information about pupils' progress and about wider school performance, but this has not been used well to drive improvement. For example, the checks on the quality of teaching are accurate, but monitoring has not been used rigorously to plan the support for individuals to help them to improve their practice.
- Teachers attend training, share ideas and are mutually supportive, but there has not been an evaluation of the impact that different approaches and techniques have on pupils' learning. Teachers appreciate the recent professional development and support they have had from the deputy headteacher, but it is too early to see an impact of this work.
- Middle leaders, including subject and year group leaders, have had some impact on improving provision for pupils. They have carried out audits of their areas of responsibility and have supported colleagues through sharing lesson planning. However, the strategic information from their evaluations has not been used effectively by senior leaders to drive changes in practice. The school improvement plan is not the outcome of close evaluation and is not sufficiently focused on those developments which will have the greatest impact.
- The targets for teachers' performance have not been sufficiently focused on pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers have not been held to account for their pupils' performance.
- The curriculum is effective in making lessons interesting for pupils by linking learning across subjects. In particular, pupils have many opportunities to develop and apply their writing skills in other subjects. However, teachers' planning does not take enough account of how pupils' skills should develop progressively through the school. As a result, pupils do not make enough progress.
- The wide range of subjects studied in lessons and the enrichment activities on offer effectively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development. The school fosters good relationships so that pupils are confident to mix with others outside their immediate experience and home backgrounds, for example through the links the school has with schools in France, Florida and Malawi. Pupils' concern for others was demonstrated during the inspection in the fundraising event to provide equipment for the link school in Malawi.
- The local authority correctly identified the school as causing concern last year and has increased its levels of support since then. The local authority has agreed a package of support for the school, including regular monitoring of teaching and learning, but this is in its initial stages of implementation and has not yet had time to impact significantly on pupils' achievements. All partners recognise that the school needs intensive support to build on the earlier work undertaken to strengthen the evaluation skills of senior and middle leaders and to build capacity across the school.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have not effectively held the school to account over time. However, in recent months, governors have been active in working with the local authority to identify and address the underlying reasons for the school's underperformance. Governors understand what the information about pupils' progress tells them about the quality of teaching, but have not ensured that pay progression is linked closely to improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
 - Governors have promoted equality of opportunity through the allocation and monitoring of pupil premium funding to ensure that the needs of individuals are supported, for example by giving access to extra-curricular activities and small-group sessions for pupils. However, the school has not been successful in ensuring that the most able pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Planning for the use of sports funding includes an element of staff training in addition to extra sports coaching. This is helping to ensure that teachers' skills will be improved and good provision will continue to have impact when funding ceases. The school's procedures to keep pupils safe meet statutory requirements. Inspectors recommend an external review of governance is undertaken.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118469
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	426468

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	378
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Reid
Headteacher	David Day
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 February 2012
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