

Tribal  
1-4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 0117 311 5359  
**Direct F** 0117 315 0430  
**Email:** christina.bannerman@tribalgroup.com

4 July 2014

Mrs Steph Guthrie  
Acting Executive Headteacher  
Madginford Park Junior School  
Egremont Road  
Bearsted  
Maidstone  
ME15 8LH

Dear Mrs Guthrie

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Madginford Park Junior School**

Following my visit with Juliet Ward, Additional inspector, to your school on 2 and 3 July, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may appoint Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) before the next monitoring inspection after discussion with me about the support available.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Kent.

Yours sincerely

Peter Gale  
**Additional Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2013**

- 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 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 are 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.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 2 and 3 July 2014**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, year leaders, the inclusion leader, groups of pupils, parents and carers, a representative from the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body, another governor and the Chair of the Governing Body of Madginford Park Infant School.

### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection an assistant headteacher and a class teacher have left the school. Two new teachers have joined the school and one teacher has moved from a support role into a class teacher role. The head of school has resigned to take a new head of school position in a federation of three schools. A new headteacher has been appointed to the planned amalgamated primary school. The school is currently awaiting confirmation from the School's Adjudicator that it can amalgamate with the infant school from September 2014.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

You have worked closely with the head of school and the local authority to stabilise staffing. This has been successful, and since February, pupils have had a far more consistent learning experience. Having established stable staffing, you have developed, with staff, a number of 'non-negotiable' features of good teaching at Madginford Junior. A range of professional development opportunities have been provided for teachers, including visiting other schools to observe best practice in teaching. This has led to a great improvement in the quality of teaching with more consistent planning and delivery across all year groups. Improved teaching in the school has led to the progress of pupils accelerating across year groups in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress is much faster this year, for all year groups, than it has been previously.

Weaker teaching in the past has resulted in the current Year 6, despite catching up this year, being behind where they should be overall, particularly in writing and mathematics. The rate of acceleration in pupils' progress is greater in most year groups in reading than it is in mathematics and writing. This is the result of your successful introduction of more formal approaches to the teaching of reading. Teachers now hold regular pupils' progress meetings. These are helping teachers in all year groups to focus on underperforming pupils. Teachers now have better assessment information to plan for the needs of their pupils. Your substantive role as headteacher of the infant school is leading to much closer transition working as pupils prepare to transfer from Years 2 to 3. Initial Year 3 assessments have been used well to inform teaching for Year 3 and drive pupils' progress.

More-able pupils are making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics than they were at the time of the last full inspection. This is due to better teaching that more regularly sets pupils challenging tasks. However, the school is aware that it needs to improve the ability of more-able pupils to write at the highest levels. There is also scope to increase the level of challenge for the more able in mathematics to help more of them reach the highest levels of attainment.

Within the four year groups of three classes there is some variability in the progress of pupils in different classes. This is related to the quality of teaching that pupils receive. There is also some variability in the progress of different groups of pupils. For example, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have made slightly slower progress than their peers during their time in the school. This is particularly true in mathematics and for Year 6 in writing where progress has been too slow. The inclusion leader has been more proactive this year than previously in planning and leading teaching assistants to deliver effective interventions for disabled pupils and for those with special educational needs. This has led to an acceleration in the progress of these pupils across the year groups.

The achievement of Year 6 pupils eligible to receive the pupil premium was poor in reading, writing and mathematics in 2013. Pupils eligible for the pupil premium are making better progress in the school than previously and the progress for older pupils in reading has been good this year. However, in Years 4 and 5, eligible pupils have made very slow progress in mathematics since starting the school. The school recognises that accelerating their progress and closing the attainment gap between them and their peers is an urgent priority.

### **The quality of teaching**

You have put in place a rigorous monitoring regime to evaluate and improve the quality of teaching. Joint observations of teaching by inspectors, accompanied by senior and middle leaders, confirm the accuracy of monitoring. Overall the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last full inspection. There is now far more consistently good teaching and inadequate teaching has been eradicated.

The improvements in teachers' practice are relatively recent. This means that while pupils' attainment is rising across the school some older pupils are yet to fully realise their potential. Senior leaders and local authority consultants have worked closely with middle leaders (those responsible for subjects, year groups or aspects) to boost leadership capacity. Your head of school and middle leaders have, in turn, worked closely with teachers to improve the quality and consistency of planning.

The outcomes of assessments are now used to plan to move pupils on rapidly. Pupils are grouped according to prior attainment and lesson tasks are sharply targeted to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding in mathematics and literacy. As a result, more pupils make good progress during lessons. An increasing understanding and focus on what pupils should be learning permeates the whole school. Teachers and teaching assistants work cohesively to improve learning in the classroom to the

benefit of pupils.

A focus on improving marking practice has led to all pupils having regular feedback. In literacy lessons pupils regularly respond to teachers' suggestions and make good progress as a result. Pupils understand how to check their books and respond to the guidance given without further prompting. Subject knowledge is secure across the curriculum and particularly in regard to improving reading. Mathematics subject knowledge is secure enough for most teachers to deliver appropriately challenging lessons for pupils. For example, good quality teaching developing pupils' algebra skills was seen during this monitoring inspection. The school knows there is scope to further develop some teachers' understanding of curriculum progression in mathematics. This would enable them to better extend more-able pupils during lessons if they complete set tasks rapidly. It would also facilitate the setting of more-challenging problems through mathematics marking to test and further develop pupils' depth of understanding.

The learning environment is both lively and stimulating. Pupils regularly use wall displays and 'working walls' to find phrases or subject-specific adjectives to guide the next steps in their learning. Lots of high-quality pupils' work adorns the walls both in classrooms and in the corridors. As a result the school looks and feels like a place where pupils are very interested in their learning. Pupils particularly enjoy being challenged and given the opportunity to work things out for themselves. They consistently and sensibly rise to the challenge. For example, in a Year 3 lesson pupils were able to accurately calculate the perimeter of a farmer's field and explain their strategies for the calculation. They then rose to the challenge of working out how much the fencing for the field would cost when given a unit cost for fencing.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils are attentive and cooperative in lessons and they are very polite and friendly around the school. They know how to behave, regularly opening doors for adults. Behaviour systems are tight and well known to pupils. For example, pupils know that they have to wait to have their lunch checked by lunchtime supervisors before moving on to a new course or leaving the table. All pupils wait patiently to be checked with their hands up.

Pupils enjoyment of and engagement with lessons has improved as teaching has improved. They say that they enjoy the increased difficulty and extra challenge in the school. When given leadership opportunities in class or around the school they consistently rise to meet them. Pupils say there are no bullies in the school, and that the school prepares them very well to understand different types of bullying. Pupils feel safe; they know very well how they should keep safe in and out of school. They also know the rules for safe use of the internet.

## **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

You have worked very well with your Head of School to stabilise the school. The local authority and the governors have been challenging and supportive in equal measure on this journey. The large majority of parents and carers who have responded to Parent View saying that they would recommend the school reflects your successes so far.

Performance information about pupils' achievements is now regularly collected and reported to parents and carers. Inspectors found that leaders' assessments of achievement were accurate when checking pupils' work in Year 6. Assessment information is then incisively analysed by your leaders to inform the next steps in pupils' learning.

The governors have worked with you to set challenging but realistic targets for pupils' progress across the year. By establishing regular milestones for pupils' progress, governors have been able to effectively monitor the work of the school. Close monitoring has also facilitated regular challenge where pupils' progress stalls or slips. For example, a temporary plateau in Year 4 progress was rapidly challenged by governors and responded to by the school. The challenge from governors has helped ensure much better progress for pupils this year. Governors and leaders at all levels are realistic. They know that although a good start has been made on improving the school more still needs to be done. They know that new systems and procedures will need to be refined and embedded, particularly in light of the planned amalgamation. Governors are also acutely aware that there is remaining underachievement for certain year groups and/or groups of pupils due to weak teaching in the past; they plan to rapidly eradicate this in the autumn. Governors are planning to link governors to year groups when the governing body reconstitutes after amalgamation. The plan is for individual governors to gain an even sharper understanding of the progress of different groups of pupils in each year to inform further support and challenge.

Targets for teachers' performance are now firmly based on the impact that their work has on pupils' achievement in their year group. Close linking of performance to pay progression is planned for the autumn when the new headteacher is in place. Middle leaders have been given more responsibility and accountability for their areas. They have formed a cohesive team charged with exchanging ideas and working together to boost pupils' achievement. They have enjoyed the structured opportunities to visit other schools to observe good practice in their areas of responsibility. Crucial to their development has been the close working with you, your head of school and local authority consultants to drive professional learning.

Middle and senior leaders are working to coach and improve the teaching in the school; every teacher has a coaching plan. This has improved the overall quality of teaching significantly and brought benefit to pupils.

Governors, including parent governors, have liaised with parents and carers to gather their views. Parents and carers are very supportive of the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools and are largely happy with the progress the school is making. Due to the good work done so far on improving the school, most parents and carers who spoke to inspectors regret the departure of you and your head of school to new positions in the autumn.

### **External support**

The local authority link to the school has organised and offered extensive and well-received support to the school. You and your head of school have managed this support very well to ensure that it has helped you move the school forward. Contacts with other local schools have helped you organise visits to observe best practice and bring it back into the school. The local authority has also assisted with the recruitment of several effective teachers and leaders since last September.