

# Madginford Primary School

Egremont Road, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent ME15 8LH

## Inspection dates

7–8 June 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders and governors work tirelessly and effectively. They have successfully merged two schools and improved teaching to good from a low starting point. Teaching is effective and pupils are achieving increasingly well.
- A culture of learning permeates the school. Leaders and staff reflect on and improve their approach when needed. Pupils do the same.
- Leaders make good use of additional funding. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from effective teaching and helpful, tailored support.
- Provision in Reception has improved markedly. Pupils benefit from a rich environment, indoors and out. Children make strong progress from their starting points and are very well prepared for Year 1.
- Teachers explain concepts well. They show skill in checking pupils' understanding and making sure that misconceptions are overcome.
- Teaching typically caters well for the needs of pupils of differing abilities. However, the challenge and depth of teachers' questioning are not consistently at the level needed for pupils, particularly the most able, to make outstanding progress.
- Pupils love learning and work hard. They enjoy new challenges and opportunities to explore and discuss ideas.
- Pupils feel safe and well looked after. Pupils and parents value the nurturing environment and high quality of care provided by staff.
- Pupils are welcoming and polite. Typically, they conduct themselves well at break and lunchtime. However, at times a few older boys are not as thoughtful and respectful as they should be in their behaviour and choice of language.
- Leaders' planning and monitoring of subjects other than mathematics and English are not tight enough to ensure consistently high standards of learning across the curriculum.
- Pupils learn the importance of respecting all, regardless of difference. However, pupils experience quite limited opportunities to learn about the nature of prejudice and discrimination.
- Governors' understanding of some aspects of the school's performance is not sharp enough for them to hold leaders consistently tightly to account.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Building on existing strengths, ensure that pupils achieve highly across the curriculum by making sure that:
  - teaching consistently provides a suitably high degree of challenge for all learners, and the most able in particular
  - teachers routinely use probing questioning that helps pupils to think deeply about their learning and make strong progress.
- Develop the curriculum so that it promotes outstanding learning across all subjects and prepares pupils very well for life in modern Britain by:
  - making sure that the curriculum consistently enables pupils to develop a high degree of skill and deep knowledge in each subject as they progress from topic to topic and year to year
  - ensuring that the curriculum provides routine opportunities for pupils to learn explicitly about the nature of prejudice and stereotyping and how to tackle it.
- Ensure that leaders and governors have a sharp understanding of all aspects of the school's performance.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and her leadership team have worked with diligence and resolve to improve the school. Leaders have successfully met the dual challenge of merging two schools and tackling inadequate provision in key stage 2. Teaching is consistently effective and pupils are achieving increasingly well.
- Leaders have high expectations of staff and pupils alike. A culture of learning and success permeates the school. Leaders are reflective and ready to adapt their approach when needed to drive continued improvement.
- Leaders' effective checks on the quality of teaching, coupled with helpful advice and training for staff, have proved pivotal in improving teaching. Wisely, leaders have adapted their approach as teaching has improved. This year, leaders have visited lessons less frequently because they now know that, typically, they can trust teachers to teach well. Leaders now devote more time to supporting individual teachers' development needs. Teachers regularly view and learn from strong practice in the school, relevant to their own work. Teachers who need to improve aspects of their practice receive helpful individual coaching.
- Leaders' development is also catered for well. Middle leaders value the mentoring and support provided by senior leaders, as well as opportunities to learn from good practice in other schools. Several are benefiting from nationally recognised leadership programmes.
- Leaders make good use of assessment information to keep track of pupils' achievement in English and mathematics and to make sure that pupils are progressing well. Leaders meet regularly with each teacher to discuss the progress of every class. They agree strategies to improve teaching for any pupil at risk of falling behind. Pupils who need it receive suitable extra support.
- Leaders draw useful reports from their assessment software programme. They use these effectively to keep track of the achievement of groups of pupils across the school. Nevertheless, these reports do not provide all the information leaders seek. In particular, the reports do not provide an incisive view of the progress of the most able pupils. Wisely, leaders have now sourced a different system which they can tailor more closely to the school's needs.
- Leaders make good use of additional funding. The use of additional teachers and individual support, such as spelling sessions, play therapy and sensory therapy, helps disadvantaged pupils engage with learning and make good progress. Leaders keep a close check on the effectiveness of their approach, adjusting it when needed. Visits to other schools have helped leaders find out and bring in new ways of working to make the best use of the funding available.
- Leaders also use additional funding well to meet the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The leader responsible for inclusion works closely with teachers, parents and external agencies. Together they identify and plan the best ways of supporting these pupils. Rightly, leaders are clear that teaching in class has to be effective if pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are to learn

well. Leaders' regular checks on the experience of these pupils in lessons help to ensure that this is the case. Frequent 'surgeries' for teachers equip them with helpful strategies to use in lessons. Leaders make good use of weekly meetings with support staff to check the effectiveness of out-of-class support.

- Although leaders make good use of additional funding, their reports on the use of funding and the overall impact of spending have not been sharp enough. The recently produced pupil premium strategy is a notable improvement. However, it still does not provide a breakdown of proposed spending. This limits leaders' and governors' ability to check that they are getting maximum value for money.
- Leaders spend sports funding wisely. Training has helped teachers develop confidence and skill in teaching physical education. A wide range of clubs offer pupils opportunities to develop new skills. This includes the 'cup speed stacking' club, which is proving a useful way of attracting less 'sporty' pupils to engage in physical activity. Sports clubs are well attended, particularly by key stage 2 pupils. Less positively, leaders do not have a sharp understanding of whether funding has resulted in improved participation and achievement in sport over time.
- Leaders have set up an engaging curriculum which captures pupils' interest and helps them make good progress. However, curriculum planning and monitoring is not consistently rigorous enough to ensure that all subjects are equally well covered and taught to a high standard. Last autumn, senior leaders made the wise decision to strengthen subject leadership to improve the situation, creating subject leaders' posts for science and foundation subjects.
- New subject leaders are getting to grips with tightening planning and monitoring in the subjects they are responsible for. However, subject leadership is not yet consistently effective. Development of a suitable method for evaluating the impact of the curriculum on pupils' achievement in science and foundation subjects is at an early stage. Consequently, subject leaders do not have a routinely sharp understanding of the effectiveness of teaching in their subject. Additionally, some leaders need further training to develop their knowledge of the subject they are leading.
- Pupils' learning in class is complemented by regular visits to a host of places of interest, and a variety of well-attended clubs and music opportunities, such as the excellent school orchestra. Parents praise the range of activities available and the strengths of music provision in particular.
- The curriculum, in the main, prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Assemblies, personal, social and health education lessons and the high expectations set by staff contribute well to this. Pupils learn to work together and be responsible young citizens. They hear about and typically embrace the importance of treating all with equal respect. However, opportunities for pupils to learn explicitly about the nature of stereotyping and discrimination and how to make a stand against them are quite limited.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors know the school well and keep abreast of developments. They make good use of information provided by leaders and regular visits to school to satisfy themselves that the school is improving. These visits provide useful opportunities for governors to

meet and question leaders about their areas of responsibility. For example, the governor responsible for pupil premium and special educational needs meets regularly with the leader responsible to check that additional funding is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

- Although effective, governors recognise they do not have the consistently deep understanding of the school's performance needed to challenge leaders to a high degree. They receive limited information about the most able pupils' achievement and the progress of all pupils in subjects beyond English and mathematics. Although governors are aware of the school's work to teach pupils about modern Britain, they do not know what impact this has on pupils' understanding across the school.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are diligent in their approach. Records are detailed and of high quality. Checks on the suitability of staff are sound. Staff are highly vigilant to any sign that a pupil might be vulnerable. Regular, timely training ensures that staff are kept abreast of the latest requirements and know what to do if they have any concern. The leader responsible refers issues appropriately to the local authority when needed. She makes sure that suitable support is available at school for any pupil who might be vulnerable. Leaders' effective relationships with parents help to ensure that parents are also well supported. Governors carry out regular checks to make sure that safeguarding arrangements are sound and that the site is safe and secure.
- Leaders rightly place a high focus on teaching pupils about the dangers of the internet and the risks that pupils face if they reveal their identity to strangers. Activities such as anti-bullying week help heighten pupils' awareness of types of bullying, why it is wrong and what to do if it happens.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teaching is increasingly effective. Pupils benefit from well-planned lessons that support good progress. Teachers explain concepts well. They check pupils' understanding and adjust their approach when needed so that pupils can overcome misconceptions.
- Lessons are a hive of industry. Pupils enjoy getting 'stuck in' to a challenge and work hard. Helpful resources and support are at hand. Pupils make confident use of these to aid their learning. They know an adult will help if they get stuck. Staff provide useful guidance which helps pupils improve.
- Support staff work effectively alongside teachers in class. They also provide useful, 'out of class' support for pupils who need extra help to make good progress.
- Phonics skills are taught well and contribute effectively to pupils' development of reading and writing skills. Staff check that pupils are grasping the phonics skills taught, intervening quickly when needed to help those who need some extra guidance.
- Teaching in mathematics is increasingly effective. Teachers' improved focus on mathematical reasoning is helping pupils deepen their grasp of concepts.
- Where teaching is most effective, pupils benefit from a deep level of challenge.

However, this is not consistently the case. Teachers typically make sure that pupils can tackle work of a suitable difficulty relative to their ability. However, the extent of challenge is not routinely high enough to ensure that pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points.

- Teachers make good use of questioning to check pupils' understanding and challenge misconceptions as a matter of course. The extent to which teachers ask the probing questions needed to deepen pupils' understanding to a high degree is more variable.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils develop into confident learners, always willing to try. They do not give up when work is hard. Pupils said they like coming to school because the teaching challenges them. Pupils learn to debate and discuss ideas with one another. They know that it is acceptable not to get it right first time.
- Pupils typically feel safe and well supported. They know that there is an adult they can turn to who will 'sort it out straight away'. Parents are clear that staff 'go that extra mile' to make sure that pupils, including those who might be vulnerable, are cared for well and can flourish at school.
- Bullying is rare. Pupils are clear that when it does happen it will be dealt with effectively, and parents agree.
- Pupils have a suitably well-developed understanding of the risks of the online world and how they can protect themselves. Pupils also learn how to keep themselves safe in the real world. This includes learning to stay safe when using roads, meeting a stranger and on bonfire night.
- Pupils typically know the importance of treating all with equal respect, regardless of difference. However, some pupils have a limited understanding of the importance of avoiding language that can leave others feeling marginalised. Older pupils reported that a few boys have a tendency to be unkind. When doing so these pupils call other boys 'gay' or accuse them of being 'girly'. Pupils said that when teachers are aware of this they challenge it. Several pupils said they had also challenged this type of behaviour. Nevertheless, pupils typically do not learn why this type of behaviour is inappropriate.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is usually exemplary. Pupils get down to learning straight away and lessons run smoothly. Pupils display excellent listening skills and value the chance to learn from the teacher and one another.
- Pupils increasingly enjoy coming to school and rarely miss a day. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved notably over the last year. Since September 2016,

no disadvantaged pupil has had a poor attendance record. In the previous year, a high proportion of these pupils had poor attendance. The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has also improved notably. Leaders' effective communication with families and external agencies and pupils' increasingly positive attitudes to school have contributed well to this.

- Outside of class, pupils, in the main, conduct themselves very well. They are polite and friendly. At break and lunchtime, pupils play and socialise happily together. They queue up for and eat lunch in a civilised manner. Pupils' attention to the whistle signalling the end of lunch is perfect. Pupils return to class calmly and sensibly. Less positive is the behaviour at times of some older pupils, when their play becomes overly boisterous.

### Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils benefit from an engaging curriculum and effective teaching. They develop excellent learning habits and a love of learning. Pupils make good progress in most subjects and are prepared well for secondary school and life in modern Britain.
- Pupils are achieving increasingly well in English and in mathematics. Typically, pupils are working at the standard expected for their age. In some year groups, where teaching is particularly effective, a considerable number of pupils are reaching a high standard. However, this is not yet consistently the case across year groups.
- Better teaching of phonics is leading to improved outcomes. In 2016, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check, although in line with the national average, had decreased from previous years. This year, improved approaches have reversed the downward decline. Almost all pupils are on track to meet the expected standard.
- Pupils apply their phonics skills well to reading and writing. They become increasingly skilful readers and effective writers as they progress through the school. Nevertheless, because of previous weaknesses in teaching and achievement, only a modest number of pupils are on track to reach a high standard in the key stage 1 national assessments this summer. The picture is stronger at key stage 2.
- Until recently, pupils' achievement in mathematics was not consistently good. Achievement by the end of key stage 2 has been low in recent years. In 2016, although pupils typically reached age-related expectations, the proportion working at a high standard was low at the end of both key stage 1 and 2. Improved approaches to teaching mathematics are helping pupils improve their mathematical reasoning skills and reach deeper levels of learning. As a result, an increasing number of pupils are working at greater depth.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Effective teaching, coupled with highly individualised support, is helping these pupils to achieve increasingly well.
- The most able pupils also achieve well. However, they do not routinely tackle work at the level of challenge needed for them to achieve a high standard across the curriculum.

### Early years provision

**Outstanding**

- Children get off to an excellent start in Reception. They benefit from very effective teaching and a rich and stimulating environment. Learning is highly purposeful and children are very engaged. They are very well prepared well for Year 1.
- Leadership is very effective. Leaders' bold decision to relocate early years has provided the space needed for children to flourish. The leader of the early years makes highly effective use of assessment information. Sessions are carefully planned to take into account children's development needs. The leader makes sure that her team receives the training and support needed to be highly effective. She, in turn, receives helpful mentoring and support from a senior leader.
- Children have a wide range of opportunities to learn through play and exploration, which promote strong progress. Very effective phonics teaching contributes strongly to children's development of early reading and writing skills. Staff check children's understanding and make sure that any misconceptions are picked up straight away. Adults ask useful questions to help children develop their thinking and understanding. Children are highly motivated and remain engaged throughout.
- Staff have high expectations and set clear routines that children follow. Children behave consistently well, throughout the day. They are friendly to each other and learn to share and respect the equipment and resources they use.
- Children are safe and very well cared for. Staff are highly vigilant. They make sure that the early years area is kept safe and secure.
- Children make strong progress from their starting points. The proportion reaching a good level of development has increased over the last three years. In 2016, it was notably higher than the national average. Improvements in children's development of reading and writing have played a key part in this.
- Current pupils are on track to achieve equally well. Children who arrived with low starting points have caught up. Others with higher starting points have made equally strong progress. A notable number of children are currently working above the level expected for their age.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities typically make excellent progress. This is due to the highly effective and nurturing support provided. Leaders keep strong links with the specialist teaching service and other agencies. Support such as speech therapy caters well for children's individual needs. Disadvantaged children are similarly well supported. Almost all have reached a good level of development in recent years.
- Parents are full of praise for the staff and the exceptional support and care provided. One parent commented, 'We couldn't have asked for a better start to his schooling years.' Another stated, 'His teacher was amazing and it was the best possible start to school life we could have hoped for.' These comments are typical of parents' views.
- Parents value the high degree of helpful communication they have with staff. They appreciate opportunities to visit the school and meet staff before their child joins. Regular 'stay and play' sessions help parents get involved in their children's learning. Parents find out and contribute information about their child's progress through a useful online system.
- Effective communication with nursery settings helps ensure that children are as well



prepared for school as possible. For example, the early years leader has worked with several nurseries to help them prepare children well for starting to read and write.

## School details

Unique reference number	118488
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10032485

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. It was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	640
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Toby Butler
Headteacher	Amanda Woolcombe
Telephone number	01622 734539
Website	<a href="http://www.madginfordprimaryschool.co.uk">www.madginfordprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@mps.kent.sch.uk">office@mps.kent.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–11 June 2008

## Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and who do not have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan (EHCP) is low. The proportion with a statement or EHCP is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is low.
- Most pupils are White British. Almost all speak English as their first language.
- In September 2014, Madginford Park Infant merged with Madginford Park Junior School and was renamed Madginford School. The school kept the registration number of the infant school.
- When the infant school was previously inspected in 2008, it was judged to be outstanding.

- When the junior school was last inspected it was judged to be providing an inadequate standard of education.
- The headteacher and her senior leadership team took up post in September 2014 when the two schools merged.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about pupil premium, the curriculum and the physical education and sports premium on its website.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 18 lessons, most jointly with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work from a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, and listened to pupils read. Inspectors attended an assembly and also watched a performance by the school brass orchestra.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior leaders and middle leaders. Discussions were held with members of the governing body, teachers, support staff, pupils and parents. The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed documents including safeguarding policies, behaviour and attendance records, the school's self-evaluation and planning documents and the school's records on performance management and teaching and learning.
- Inspectors took account of 58 staff survey responses and 149 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, inspectors considered 84 responses from parents by free text. There were no replies to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

## Inspection team

Diana Choulerton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dan Lambert	Her Majesty's Inspector
Chris Donovan	Ofsted Inspector
Kirstine Boon	Ofsted Inspector
Graham Chisnell	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

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