

Madginford Park Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118488
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312962
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Jacque Buttriss

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	271
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Humphrey
Headteacher	Linda Cann
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2004
School address	Merton Road Bearsted Maidstone ME15 8LJ
Telephone number	01622 738351
Fax number	01622 739117

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an above-average-size infant school in a suburban area of Maidstone, adjacent to the local junior school. There is extended school provision before and after school.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school in every way. As the headteacher has said, it is a place 'where small children have big experiences' and where the school motto of 'be the best you can be' is fulfilled by pupils on a daily basis. From broadly average attainment when they come into the Reception classes, pupils of all abilities make outstanding progress through the school. They reach standards far above national averages by the time they reach the end of Year 2.

Outstanding personal development and well-being are demonstrated in everything pupils do. They have a very good understanding of how to be healthy and many of them take part in additional activities such as gym club. Pupils feel very safe and secure within this 'very caring and nurturing community', as described by a parent. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils demonstrate outstanding enjoyment of every aspect of school life. As a parent commented, 'My son loves school so much that he would go at the weekend as well!' The active school councillors take great pride in their work and pupils say, 'The school council helps make the school a better place so we'll be happy in school.' Pupils' excellent academic achievements and acquisition of a wide range of skills ensure that they are outstandingly well prepared for the next stage in their learning. Attendance is very good and on an upward trend. Leaders are making excellent efforts to raise this still further, but there are still too many parents who take their children on holidays during term time.

Teaching inspires learners of all abilities to achieve their full potential. Excellent teaching makes lessons exciting and motivating throughout the school, so that pupils love their learning and are eager to do their best. 'We have lovely teachers,' said one pupil and parents are full of praise for the 'fantastic staff' who make learning 'such fun'.

The curriculum is greatly enriched by a wide variety of additional learning opportunities, such as the 'farm in school' day during the inspection. Good planning ensures that pupils benefit from an outstanding variety of stimulating activities in an exceptionally well-balanced curriculum which 'meets the holistic needs of my children as well as academic ones,' as one parent wrote.

Outstanding pastoral care is a great strength of the school and parents are full of praise for the way all staff 'always go the extra mile' in supporting and caring for their children. Academic guidance also has a very positive impact on pupils' learning and helps them to achieve as highly as they can.

Leadership and management are outstanding at all levels. 'We are thrilled with the whole ethos of the school,' commented a parent. The dedicated headteacher leads a very strong staff team, with excellent support from governors. The headteacher's outstanding vision is shared with all the staff and this has helped the school to successfully drive forward improvements on every front since the last inspection. Parents say they are justifiably proud of their children's 'world-class' school. The exceptionally high number of positive responses from parents demonstrates their overwhelming support. Typical comments include, 'I can't speak highly enough' and 'I would have no hesitation in recommending this school'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Outstanding educational experiences are provided for all Reception children. As one parent says, 'Madginford Infant School provides a wonderful start for young learners.' Teachers in the Reception classes know their children and their achievements very well and the strong staff

team works hard to ensure that children have an exciting and rich springboard for their learning. The excellent variety of motivating activities stimulates children's thinking, fosters their love of learning and develops their confidence and independence right from the start. Teachers challenge children to look for answers, make choices and solve problems. There is an excellent balance between directed and child-initiated activities. All children are keenly involved and are inspired by their very lively learning environment. Creativity is given a high priority, with excellent opportunities for role play, music, art work and physical activities. Children make very good progress to reach above-average standards by the end of the Reception year. Partnership with parents is excellent and leadership of the Foundation Stage is outstanding, impressively translating the school's vision into everyday practice.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase attendance rates by ensuring that all parents understand the importance of not taking family holidays during term time.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children's attainment when they come into the Reception classes is in line with national expectations. They make good progress and achieve above-average standards at the end of their first year. Pupils make great strides in their learning and make outstanding progress through the school to achieve standards far above national averages in all subjects tested by the time they are ready to move on to the junior school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported, with the result that they make outstanding progress. The most able pupils are appropriately challenged, which also enables them to demonstrate outstanding achievement. Many parents expressed their satisfaction with how well their children are doing at this school, as reflected in one parent's comment: 'My daughter is making amazing progress.'

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and are very positive about what they do. As one parent wrote, 'My son is learning a lot, not only in lessons but also has discussions with the teachers about everyday life.' Pupils of all ages feel happy, safe and settled and relate exceptionally well to adults as well as to each other. They say that teachers are really friendly, kind and helpful. Excellent relationships ensure that behaviour is outstanding because pupils know what is expected of them, and they play together exceptionally well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and parents comment on 'how well the school celebrates families' different cultural and religious backgrounds'. Pupils proudly take on increasing responsibility as they move through the school, such as being 'playground helpers'. They enjoy talking confidently about the importance of looking after the environment. Pupils have taken part in charity fundraising as well as in local community activities such as singing to the elderly and in a local church. They also have wider links with schools in France and the Gambia. Pupils are well aware of which foods are healthy and talk enthusiastically of the sports clubs and activities they attend after school. Learners acquire high standards of basic skills and work outstandingly well together, gaining excellent preparation for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Outstanding teaching throughout enables pupils of all abilities to achieve extremely well and make excellent progress. The whole school is a rich and stimulating learning environment where lively displays reflect the pupils' diverse abilities. Teachers have excellent knowledge, infectious enthusiasm and strong questioning skills to extend children's thinking and learning. Teachers demonstrate high expectations and help pupils to judge how successful they have been in their learning. Pupils find this approach highly motivating and it increases their eagerness to learn. Pupils of all abilities are well challenged and this ensures the tasks match all their different needs very well. Teachers plan lessons jointly, which enables them to share best practice and identify creative ways to help pupils get the most out of their learning. Consequently, exciting lessons capture pupils' full attention, hold their interest and make learning enjoyable and fun. Teaching assistants are partners in the learning environment and are used very effectively to support pupils' learning. There are very good systems in place to promote pupils' independent learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school's curriculum is impressive because, although it is very broad, balanced and creative, it maintains its emphasis on basic skills. Activities are highly relevant to the needs of pupils because the curriculum is continuously reviewed and updated. The focused topics mean that all learning is cross curricular and this in turn means that whole-school initiatives such as problem solving and independent learning can easily be developed across all subject areas. The school's innovative curriculum planning is focused on making learning dynamic, exciting and fun. An impressive variety of exciting enrichment activities ensures that the curriculum is lively and highly relevant to pupils' interests. This has a strong influence on pupils' personal development. Events such as the themed days, often involving families and the local community, are a great success and make everyone feel 'so pleased to be part of this school'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Excellent procedures for child protection are very well established, and are understood by all staff. The school works outstandingly well with parents and outside agencies to ensure pupils and their families have access to appropriate support. Parents strongly appreciate this; as one commented, 'The welfare and needs of the children are always put first.' Procedures for tracking pupils' progress are rigorous and identify ways to ensure that all individuals and groups of pupils achieve as well as possible. Use of well-focused assessment and clear targets for learning helps all pupils to understand how well they are doing and how they can improve. The school is outstandingly successful in providing an environment where pupils are well rounded, confident and secure and valued as individuals.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Under the headteacher's excellent leadership, leaders at all levels set outstandingly clear direction, which has very successfully driven forward improvements since the last inspection. Leaders share exceptionally clear vision and direction for the school. The enthusiastic and hard-working leadership team provides very strong support in monitoring provision and raising standards. All subject leaders monitor provision and outcomes in their subjects and all undertake lesson observations, so that they know how well pupils learn and what areas to focus on for further development. The school has outstanding self-evaluation processes, including rigorous tracking of progress and careful analysis of data, leading to the accurate identification of areas for further improvement. School leaders and staff have worked diligently in the past year to identify and address a comparative weakness in girls' attainment in mathematics, with dramatically successful outcomes within one year. Consequently, girls are now performing as well as boys in this subject. This demonstrates the school's excellent capacity for further improvement. Governors undertake their roles and responsibilities exceptionally well and with a high degree of expertise, providing appropriate challenge and comprehensive support. The outstanding equality of opportunity and inclusion throughout the school ensures that learners of all abilities achieve as well as they can. Excellent partnerships with other schools and organisations enhance learners' well-being, such as the strengthening of links with the junior school, which ensures smooth transition for pupils from one school to the next.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Dear Children,

Inspection of Madginford Park Infant School, Bearsted, Maidstone ME15 8LJ

Thank you for being so friendly, polite and helpful when we came to inspect your school. You made us feel very welcome indeed. We all enjoyed talking with you. Yours is an outstanding school. It helps you to do excellent work and cares for you extremely well.

These are the things we especially like about your school:

- You all make excellent progress and achieve very high standards in your work. Well done!
- You have great respect for one another and your behaviour is excellent.
- You have excellent relationships with each other and you work and play very well together.
- You have outstanding teachers who work very hard to make your lessons exciting and fun for you all.
- All of you are given work which you can find interesting and enjoyable.
- All the adults in your school take very great care of you all.
- You enjoy school very much and are keen to do your best. Keep it up!
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors are leading the school outstandingly well and are working hard to make it even better.
- Your parents and carers are very keen to help you with your learning and are delighted that you come to this school.

This is what we think your school could do even better:

- The school could make sure that all your parents know how important it is that you don't take holidays or days off during term time.

You could help by continuing to work hard and enjoy your lessons so that you keep up your excellent achievement. I would like to wish you lots of success in your future learning. Keep up the great work! Yours sincerely,

Jacquie Buttriss Lead Inspector