

Madginford Park Junior School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 118469 |
| Local Authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 326834 |
| Inspection date | 8 July 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Sheila Browning |

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

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 382 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Peter Reid |
| Headteacher | David Day |
| Date of previous school inspection | 5 July 2006 |
| School address | Egremont Road Bearsted Maidstone ME15 8LH |
| Telephone number | 01622 738802 |
| Fax number | 01622 736566 |

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|--------------------------|-------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- how successfully the school is tackling weaknesses in pupils' writing
- how well more able pupils are challenged through teaching and the curriculum
- the opportunities for more independent learning
- the accuracy of self-evaluation by leadership and management and their effectiveness in securing improvement.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with pupils, members of staff and governors, observations of teaching and learning, the views of parents, scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Madginford Park Junior School is a larger than average junior school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Most of these pupils have moderate behavioural, emotional and social needs and/or speech, language and communication needs.

Key for inspection grades

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| 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 is improving in several areas. As a result of the many opportunities to promote pupils' good personal development and well-being, most pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Their attitudes are good, as is their attendance and behaviour, which ensures a good working atmosphere. Pupils show an excellent knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy. They choose healthy snacks, participate in numerous sports, and are very successful in the competitions and events they enter. Pupils eagerly talked about 'Walk on Wednesday' and 'Bikeability'. The school has Healthy School status and an Activemark acknowledging its commitment to promoting the benefits of physical activity. Pupils and parents spoke warmly of the buddy system linking Year 3 pupils with a partner in Year 6 to help the Year 3 pupils settle. The headteacher has successfully set the right balance between promoting pupils' personal development and well-being and their academic achievement. Two parental comments typical of many were, 'Children become confident, well-rounded and capable youngsters who are very well prepared for the transition to secondary school' and, 'My children have flourished.'

The school plays an active role in the local community and has strong international links. Pupils take their responsibilities as school councillors and as house and sports captains very seriously. 'We make a real difference,' said one pupil. For example, Year 4 pupils considered a major local development and presented their views to the planning inspectorate. The school's International School Award reflects pupils' extensive international awareness. They fundraise and write to a school in Malawi, and a recent Year 6 project led to two weeks of live web casts with a school in Florida. Pupils are pen pals with children from a school in Lille, have a French exchange day, and sponsor a child in India. Though the school's promotion of community cohesion is generally good, pupils do not have a good understanding of the diversity of people, places and backgrounds in Britain today.

The curriculum is enriched with an increasing range of popular lunchtime and after-school activities, from sewing to football. Pupils enjoy visits and visitors. They loved the recent mathematics day and said, 'We had real Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone problems to solve.' While innovations to the curriculum are promoting cross-curricular links in creativity, there is still some scope to develop more exciting and relevant writing opportunities across the curriculum. Pupils' independent learning is fostered well in all year groups.

Good teaching and planning, combined with positive relationships and accurate knowledge of pupils' progress, ensure that they make good progress. Provision for information and communication technology has been greatly improved to underpin teaching and learning. For example, Year 5 pupils used laptops for persuasive letter writing, to invite their parents to their 'Rainforest Café'. Pupils really enjoyed reading out their letters to the class while gesturing and talking in imaginary voices of mice, sloths and humming birds. Year 4 enjoyed their introductory animation lesson, viewing video clips of themselves as a reference point to look at body movements before using software to create an on-screen waving and skipping 'pivot man'. The school is also pioneering some innovative aspects of technology to create a 'virtual learning environment'. Though at an early stage, this will enable pupils, parents and staff to access school documentation, contribute to an online 'blog' and to share learning tips and skills.

The school has excellent procedures for safeguarding. Care, guidance and support for learners are good, with strengths in the care and support pupils receive. The excellent links with parents,

strong links with specialists and the good support provided are reasons why pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve so well. Data to chart and check pupils' progress are used effectively. Challenging targets are set and the information is used to pinpoint any likely underperformance. To overcome the school's concerns about the differing picture of teachers' own assessments compared to pupils' attainment on entry, the school is developing a system to analyse this more closely. The information will be used to target interventions and support early on. Older pupils are certainly clear about their targets and say teachers' comments on their work usually help them to understand how to improve their work.

Although pupils' attainment on joining the school covers the full range, it is generally above average in English and mathematics. Pupils achieve well and a large number achieve at or above the level expected for their age. By Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, and for some pupils standards are high. The rigorous support and focus given to reading is evident in the well above average standards achieved. The school has taken successful action to maintain these higher than average standards and to identify and tackle writing weaknesses where standards have not been as high. The school continues to focus effectively on improving pupils' spelling and punctuation skills and standards are rising, especially in creative story writing. However, more able pupils still have scope to be challenged further in their writing through more purposeful writing activities across the curriculum. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and there are clear, well-thought-out school improvement plans and priorities. The contributions of the headteacher and governing body in giving direction and impetus to the school's work are strong. Governors ensure their understanding of the school's performance is based on first-hand experience and they challenge the school effectively. The shared clarity of vision and recent restructuring of the leadership team have enabled staff to develop their leadership skills as well as their accountability so that leadership and management are good. The monitoring of teaching and learning is robust and all cooperate to share best practice. The headteacher has motivated and engaged staff at all levels, and has secured excellent resources and good accommodation. These features and the record of success ensure a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the writing skills of more able pupils and ensure they have challenging and more purposeful writing opportunities throughout the curriculum.
- Extend ways to help pupils understand and participate in the increasingly diverse community in Britain today.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| 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 capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress | 2 |

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 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

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| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 |

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 2 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 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 |

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

9 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Madginford Park Junior School, Maidstone ME15 8LH

I very much enjoyed talking with you and seeing your work when I visited you. It was great to see how much you really enjoy school. I agree with you and your parents that the teaching is good and Madginford is a good school. This is what I found on my visit.

- Your behaviour is good and you try really hard in lessons, which is why you achieve well and reach above average standards. Well done!
- The teachers provide you with suitable work and try to make your learning fun.
- You are looked after well so that you are very safe at school. You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy, fit and safe.
- Your headteacher and other adults are doing a good job to make sure you receive a good, well-rounded education. You told me about all the recent improvements and how much you enjoyed mathematics day and want more.
- Well done those of you who take on extra responsibilities. You really are making a positive difference for everyone at Madginford.
- I hope that you continue to produce the Madginford Newspaper; it will help your writing skills too!
- You told me about the great range of activities and experiences you have.
- The school works extremely well with parents and the local community to make sure you have the best opportunities to help you to learn. Many of the Year 6 told me how sad they were to be leaving.

I have asked your headteacher and other adults to do these two things.

- Make sure those of you who find learning easy have more opportunities to improve your writing skills and check that you are really challenged all the time to produce the best writing that you can.
- Help you to have a greater awareness and understanding of the range of cultures and beliefs of people in this country.

You can help too by continuing to always do your best. Yours faithfully

Sheila Browning

Lead inspector