

Maidenbower Junior School

Harvest Road, Maidenbower, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 7RA

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The newly appointed headteacher has had a wholly positive impact on the school. She has united the staff behind a clear vision of improving outcomes and accelerating progress for all pupils.
- Teaching sustains pupils' interest and provides them with a range of engaging and exciting learning opportunities. As a result, pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their different starting points.
- The well-planned, imaginative curriculum provides many exciting opportunities for pupils to develop a wide range of skills, across the curriculum.
- Governors know the school well. They use a wide range of information to reach a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Pupils are safe and are taught to stay safe. A strong culture of safeguarding is threaded through the school. All staff know exactly what to do if they have a concern and they act swiftly to secure pupils' well-being.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to school. They come to lessons ready to learn and eager to tackle the work that teachers plan for them.
- Pupils behave well in school because relationships in the school are based on a strong foundation of respect. Everyone knows the school rules and pupils rise to the high expectations that staff have of them.
- The great majority of parents are positive about the school, the quality of teaching and the good progress that pupils make. Most agree that the school has improved since the new headteacher has started.
- Too few pupils make the progress needed to achieve a greater depth of learning in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because teachers do not have a clear understanding of what pupils need to do to achieve these higher standards.
- Attendance is close to the national average. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below this figure.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teachers' subject knowledge so that the progress of middle-ability pupils and the most able accelerates and more of these pupils achieve the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that all pupils reap the benefits of regular attendance at school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The newly appointed headteacher has wasted no time in galvanising staff and governors behind a clear vision based on a high level of expectation for all pupils. The school is united in a drive to raise standards and accelerate rates of progress through an exciting and engaging curriculum. Many parents commented on the positive impact of the new headteacher.
- Morale is very high and all staff feel proud to be part of the team. They work effectively to provide a good quality of education for pupils. Everyone has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils, staff and parents confirm that behaviour is good and that the school is a happy, welcoming community.
- Senior leaders were rightly disappointed in the end-of-key-stage-2 results in 2016. Pupils' attainment in the tests did not reflect the levels that leaders judged them capable of. Leaders have spared no efforts in getting to grips with the reasons for this poor performance. They have put effective measures in place to help this year's cohort of pupils be better prepared for the national key-stage-2 tests.
- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school based on a wide range of evidence. They have clear plans for improvement and can explain the reasons for the actions that they have taken. These are making a positive difference to raising standards.
- Middle leaders are effective. They use good subject knowledge and detailed monitoring information to acquire an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their subject. They are well trained and receive effective support and challenge from senior leaders, who ensure that improvement priorities reflect the wider issues identified in the school improvement plan.
- Leaders at all levels are clearly focused on improving the quality of teaching. They regularly monitor teaching and learning, using a comprehensive range of information. These include looking at pupils' work, observing teaching and learning, checking on teachers' planning and talking to pupils. Performance management for teachers is used effectively to support this drive to improve teaching.
- Teachers are well supported in their development at all stages of their career, including newly qualified teachers. All are encouraged to improve and are offered a range of opportunities for professional development. Teaching assistants and support staff are also given many opportunities to develop their skills and further their ambitions.
- The school is outward-looking because senior leaders recognise that there is much to be learned from other schools and sources of expertise. As a result, the school regularly engages with the local authority and works with a range of local schools and professionals in its concerted drive for improvement. This is having a positive impact as leaders are assured that their judgements are accurate.

- This school takes great pride in the broad and balanced curriculum that engages and excites pupils. Topics are planned well to give an interesting range of experiences that bring learning to life for pupils. Leaders are determined to give an equity of experience for all pupils while at the same time working hard to engage and differentiate to meet all ability needs. Learning is further enriched by visits outside of the school gates. Pupils in all year groups benefit from adventurous residential trips.
- The curriculum helps prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils have regular opportunities to learn about other cultures and faiths. They have a good understanding of British values, including democracy, because they see them regularly in practice in school life.
- The physical education (PE) and sports premium is used well to ensure that all pupils have many opportunities to participate in physical activities. PE and games have a high priority in the school and pupils are taught to develop their skills, try new activities, and represent the school in competitions. There are many sports clubs that run after school. The school has recently received an award in recognition of its PE and games provision.
- The school spends additional money wisely to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, these pupils make good progress. Good use is made of pupil premium funding to provide well-targeted support for disadvantaged pupils to help those who are behind to catch up. Money used to partly fund school trips, including residential activities, makes sure that no pupils miss out.
- The large majority of parents who expressed an opinion said that they would recommend the school to other parents. They feel that pupils are well cared for, taught well and make good progress. A few parents are less happy with the school and feel that the school does not communicate sufficiently with them.
- The local authority knows the school well. It has offered effective support to the school during the recent period of transition to the new headteacher, ensuring that it is well placed to improve further.

Governance of the school

- Governors are a highly visible part of the school community and know the school well. The headteacher provides governors with helpful regular and detailed reports about the school's performance. Governors check carefully that the information provided aligns with their findings from their regular visits to the school and meeting with local authority. Governors use this information well to hold school leaders to account. They undertake the right training to ensure that they are well equipped to be able to do this.
- Governors make sure they take parents' views in to account and keep them well informed about developments in the school.
- Safeguarding plays an important part of governors' role in the school. Governors ensure that policies are regularly reviewed and kept up to date. They make regular checks on all aspects of safeguarding, including ensuring that the school grounds are safe for pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Leaders ensure that policies, records and practice are thorough and detailed. Careful checks are always carried out on adults recruited to work in the school.
- All staff are clear about how to identify and record any worries about a pupil and make sure these are passed on swiftly to the leader responsible for safeguarding. The school has recently invested in a secure computerised system for recording these concerns. It is well understood and regularly used by staff, who use it to note even relatively minor concerns. This helps leaders maintain a tight overview.
- Much time and effort are put into providing effective support for pupils and families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Leaders work with experts outside of the school to safeguard these pupils and ensure that they attend school regularly.
- Site safety arrangements are secure. Regular fire drills help ensure that pupils would be able to leave the buildings as safely as possible in an emergency. The recent practise of a 'lock down' situation has helped ensure that all pupils know how to be safe inside the building when leaving it is not possible.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils enjoy learning. Time in lessons is used very effectively. Staff have established clear routines which pupils understand and follow without question. This results in productive classrooms where learning carries on smoothly. Interesting lessons spark pupils' curiosity and help them develop their skills and deepen their understanding.
- Teachers regularly ask pupils to explain their ideas and find solutions to problems, carefully probing any inconsistencies in pupils' explanations. Teachers' skilful questioning helps pupils to become articulate, confident thinkers.
- When pupils are not entirely clear about a particular aspect of the lesson, teachers ask searching questions to get to the root of the problem. Teachers encourage pupils to find solutions of their own by suggesting strategies for overcoming the difficulty. This helps to foster pupils' independence and resilience successfully.
- Teachers use effective assessment techniques to help pupils learn well. Teachers regularly check on pupils' understanding during lessons so that any misconceptions are quickly ironed out. This approach together with regular assessments of pupils' completed work helps teachers have a secure grasp of each pupil's strengths and weaknesses and then plan accordingly.
- Pupils achieve well in reading because leaders have placed a strong emphasis on making reading a rewarding, enjoyable experience. Pupils say that teachers help them to become good readers by providing them with a variety of books and opportunities to read. For example, a Year 5 pupil talked enthusiastically about an adapted version of 'David Copperfield' that he had recently enjoyed. The newly refurbished library, strategically placed in the centre of the school, offers pupils an attractive, inviting place to sit and enjoy books. It is an extremely popular and well-used space.

- Teachers have worked effectively to improve writing across the school. They appreciate how hard it is for pupils to write with flair and imagination if they are not inspired to do so. Much learning is planned around exciting texts that provide pupils with rich opportunities to become good writers. Pupils regularly write at length. One boy particularly enjoyed writing, saying, 'You can just get creative and set your mind free.' Teachers provide useful guidance that helps pupils improve their skills.
- Earlier this year, leaders recognised a weakness in pupils' mental arithmetic which prevented pupils from achieving as well as they could in mathematics. Leaders promptly implemented a programme which all teachers use daily. This has had an immediate impact in helping pupils acquire a secure, rapid recall of number facts and develop reliable, quick mental methods. Pupils in Year 6, for example, showed remarkable speed and accuracy when multiplying decimals together in their head, and finding the difference between two large numbers.
- Teaching is good across the curriculum. Pupils' work in art, science and history, for example, reflects the same high standards seen in mathematics and English. A specialist music teacher ensures that pupils learn to play musical instruments, sing beautifully and perform to an audience.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support the learning of a wide range of pupils. These staff are trained thoroughly and make a vital and valuable contribution to pupils' learning well.
- The 'Oasis' speech and language provision helps pupils who are behind to catch up. Pupils make good progress because the teaching is well pitched to individual needs. The longer they stay in the school, the better the progress they make.
- Homework provides opportunities for pupils to practise their skills, such as with grasping spelling and times tables skills. It also gives opportunities to further develop pupils' love of reading.
- Pupils usually receive work that helps them to achieve their best. However, at times teachers do not provide work of the depth, challenge and complexity needed for pupils of average ability and the most able pupils to reach a high standard, especially in mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are safe and have confidence in the staff, who take good care of them. Pupils know that adults have their best interests at heart. Staff listen carefully and take swift action if a pupil has any worries.
- Pupils learn how to stay safe in a range of situations. Leaders place a high priority on ensuring that pupils know how to stay safe online. Pupils develop a secure appreciation of the dangers that they might face and how to avoid them.

- Pupils grow into confident individuals who regularly talk maturely about their thoughts, ideas and feelings. They know that others will listen respectfully to what they say. Pupils reflect perceptively on their work. For example, one pupil explained, 'I want to create the energy of someone doing a back somersault' as they considered what they were trying to achieve in their art work.
- Pupils value the many opportunities provided to take responsibility and to serve others. They take pride in roles such as those of school councillors, peer mediators and digital leaders. Pupils commendably look for ways to help charities and good causes. Their efforts have raised over £9000 in the last year.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This very large school is a calm, orderly place. The corridors are bright and lively, containing many attractive displays of pupils' work. Cloakrooms are tidy and well cared for. The environment reflects the high standards for which leaders strive.
- Pupils behave well around the school. They are polite and well mannered, thoughtful and respectful to adults and their peers alike.
- Pupils get on well together. They chat together while eating lunch and play well outside during breaktimes. Although some pupils play lively games, these do not spill over or lead to fall outs.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and almost all have positive attitudes to learning. There are very few instances of off-task behaviour. This is because staff consistently promote leaders' high expectations of behaviour which pupils understand and live up to.
- Overall, rates of attendance are in line with those seen nationally. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below that of other pupils nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders have successfully tackled previous weaknesses in teaching. As a result, pupils now make good progress across most curriculum subjects.
- Pupils typically achieve well in English and mathematics from their varying starting points. Many more pupils are on track to meet age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 than in 2016. Also, more pupils are well placed to achieve the higher standards than was previously the case.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making increasingly good progress. For example, in Years 5 and 6 the difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in school is diminishing in all subjects, because disadvantaged pupils are making more rapid progress.

- Effective teaching and well-planned use of interventions are helping pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, sometimes from very low starting points. The few pupils who attend the school's 'Oasis' speech and language provision make good progress.
- In recent years, pupils have joined the school in Year 3 with starting points that have been well above those found nationally. For the last few years, pupils have made much less progress across key stage 2 than they should have done. In 2016, the proportion of pupils in Year 6 who met age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics was below that seen nationally.
- While pupils' progress is accelerating in reading, writing and mathematics overall, too few pupils exceed the standards expected for their age, especially in mathematics. Not enough most-able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are working at the depth they are capable of. This is also true of some middle-ability pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	131603
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10024513

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	595
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Pratt
Headteacher	Elaine Jenkins
Telephone number	01293 883758
Website	www.maidenbowerjunior.co.uk
Email address	head@maidenbowerjunior.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 February 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school runs the 'Oasis' provision onsite. This provides for eight pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The headteacher took up the post of acting headteacher in October 2016. This post was made substantive in February 2017. She had previously been the school's deputy headteacher.
- Maidenbower Junior School is a much larger than average sized junior school. There are five classes in each year group.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average. Levels of deprivation are well below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and pupils who speak English as an additional language is below that seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national figures.
- The school meets the government's floor standards for 2016. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 26 lessons. Some of these were joint observations with senior leaders. An inspector observed an assembly.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils from Years 3 to 6 and listened to several children read. They spoke to pupils in lessons, during playtimes and around the school.
- The lead inspector met with senior leaders to discuss their evaluation of the school and outcomes for pupils. He met with the chair of the governing body and two other governors. He had a meeting with a representative of the local authority. He also met with a group of staff, which included teachers, teaching assistants and a member of the office team.
- Inspectors met with a range of other school leaders, including the special educational need coordinator. An inspector visited the 'Oasis' special educational needs provision.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan, safeguarding and behaviour records, performance and attendance information for current pupils, and a number of school policies, including those on the school website.
- Inspectors carried out a detailed scrutiny of pupils' books in all year groups and all ability ranges.
- Inspectors considered 127 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire, including 76 free-text responses, alongside two emails received from parents. They met with parents at the school gate at the start of both days of the inspection. They also considered questionnaire responses from 61 members of staff.

Inspection team

Bruce Waelend, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Parfoot	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Hogarth	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.

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