

# Maidstone and Malling Alternative Provision

The Cedars, 8 Bower Mount Road, Maidstone, Kent ME16 8AU

## Inspection dates

20–21 June 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is inconsistent across the school. Planned activities are often not well matched to pupils' knowledge and prior learning.
- Teachers are not held sufficiently to account for the progress that pupils are making within their subjects. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are often too low.
- Leaders have too optimistic a view of the school. They are in the early stages of developing a system of assessment and do not clearly analyse the progress of different groups of pupils. Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils does not always have a positive impact on outcomes.
- The attendance of some pupils, especially in key stage 4, while improving, is still low.
- Pupils do not get enough chances to practise their handwriting skills.
- The school's website does not comply with all the necessary requirements.
- A lengthy period of restructure has affected the school's drive for improvement. This is largely due to the number of redundancies imminently about to take effect, and the school going through a process of reducing in size.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new management committee has a clear vision of how to improve the school. Overall financial management is strong.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders have worked hard to manage the school's day-to-day operation and maintain staff morale.
- Pupils who attend the primary provision make good progress in their personal and academic development.
- Those with education, health and care plans make good progress.
- Progress is stronger in mathematics in key stage 3. Work is carefully matched to meet individual pupils' needs.
- Pupils' personal development across the school is good. Staff help pupils to develop the self-confidence to plan for the future.
- Pupils like the extensive programme of work experience, including outdoor learning opportunities.

## Full report

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

- Improve leadership and management, by:
  - ensuring that self-evaluation more accurately reflects the school
  - holding teachers more rigorously to account for the progress that pupils are making
  - using accurate assessment information to analyse the progress of different groups
  - making sure that additional funding, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, is used effectively to boost pupils' progress, and providing clear information to the management committee
  - ensuring that the school's website complies with requirements
  - improving pupils' attendance, particularly in key stage 4.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to improve pupils' progress, by:
  - making sure that teachers challenge pupils and use information about what pupils already know to plan work that meets their needs
  - providing opportunities for pupils to extend the quality and quantity of their handwriting skills.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The school has gone through a period of turbulence which has had an adverse effect on the smooth day-to-day running of the school. Senior leaders have worked hard to maintain balance while managing a major restructure which includes many redundancies. However, the process has taken some time to implement and it has distracted leaders from making the improvements needed.
- Self-evaluation is too generous, particularly with regard to the progress pupils are making and the quality of teaching. The school's system of assessment is still developing; there is too little analysis of the progress pupils are making from their starting points. Systems to check the quality of teaching are not fully effective because staff are not held sufficiently to account for the amount of progress pupils make in their classes.
- The school is unable to clearly account for the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. Leaders can identify where the additional funds for disadvantaged pupils have been spent, and it is clear that it has had an impact on improving the attendance of some of them. However, in common with the rest of the school, no effective system of assessing their progress is in place.
- More positively, leaders and staff have ensured that pupils' personal development is good. Despite the uncertainty caused by the restructuring and redundancies, staff have remained committed to ensuring that pupils are given the time and attention to help them make positive choices and plan for their futures. Parents who were spoken to expressed their gratitude to staff. They praised the care and support staff have given to their children to help them re-engage in learning.
- The curriculum is appropriately organised. It provides for the development of pupils' core skills for those on short-term placements in key stage 3. Pupils in key stage 4 who stay on until the end of Year 11 are provided with a range of vocational and academic opportunities. These include entry-level qualifications to GCSEs in English, mathematics, history, photography and art and design.
- There are a range of extra-curricular reward trips, such as trips to museums and activity centres. These have a positive influence on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. There is an effective programme of careers advice and guidance. Pupils who were spoken to during the inspection all had clear plans for their future work and training.
- Pupils who attend the short-stay primary provision are well supported. The curriculum is highly structured and appropriate for pupils' needs. Leaders ensure that there are clear plans in place to enable each pupil to develop effectively their emotional understanding and re-integrate smoothly back into mainstream school. The primary provision does not receive any additional funding for primary physical education and sports premium.
- The school ensures that any additional funding it receives for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is appropriately spent on providing resources for them. Due to the special educational needs coordinator's (SENCo's) monitoring, there is clear evidence of the impact of the funding on improving the outcomes of those who

are on education, health and care plans. The impact is less clear for other pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because, in common with the rest of the school, information regarding progress is less carefully monitored.

- There are very few pupils in school who are currently in Year 7. The school does not receive any Year 7 catch-up funding.

### **Governance of the school**

- School leadership, including the management committee, has not ensured that the school's website meets requirements on the publication of specified information for parents.
- The new management committee, with support from the local authority, is highly experienced and has a clear vision for the school's role in the future. It has developed a strategic plan which correctly identifies the improvements that need to be made. Towards this end, significant changes to the school structure and size are imminently due to take effect.
- Financial management is rigorous. The management committee minutes show that it is precisely aware of the school's finances. Although members of the management committee know how the pupil premium is spent, they have not received sufficient information so they can clearly determine its impact.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- It is the priority of all staff to ensure that pupils are safe in this school. Additionally, staff are highly attuned to current issues which may pose a safeguarding risk, such as from exposure to gangs and extremism. Staff work well together to identify any pupils who may be vulnerable. Safeguarding procedures for pupils who attend the primary provision are also effective. Parents who were spoken to during the inspection all said that their children felt safe.
- Senior leaders ensure that stringent checks are made on the suitability of adults to work with pupils. Staff work well with external agencies and are well trained to spot the signs and symptoms of abuse.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Often, teachers do not challenge pupils enough in their work and hence pupils do not make the progress of which they may be capable.
- Systems of assessment, that track pupils' progress, are not well enough established. Although staff assess the skills and abilities of each pupil when they join the school, they often do not make enough use of this information to provide the right level of work to allow each pupil to make rapid progress. Leaders are only in the early stages of making use of assessment information to track the progress of different groups.
- Books and folders show that pupils' progress in handwriting is often very inconsistent.

Some pupils say they do not like handwriting. Progress in developing other skills in English, such as reading and interpreting text, is stronger. For example, pupils carefully described the plot and characters in the short story by Charles Dickens called 'The signalman'.

- Pupils often make better progress in mathematics at key stage 3, where teaching is more effective. This is because a careful assessment is made of each pupil's gaps in learning when they start school. Work is then provided to fill these gaps so that pupils can quickly progress to the next concept.
- In the primary provision pupils are given activities that challenge and often delight them. Staff have a wealth of knowledge that they use effectively to support pupils to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they have developed good relationships and trust the school staff. One expressed the views of many that, 'staff here actually care about me'. Parents who were spoken to say that staff have gone 'over and above' what is required of them. They say this has had a positive impact on their children's emotional well-being.
- Staff are effective in helping pupils to develop their self-belief to become successful learners. All key stage 4 pupils who were spoken to during the inspection had a clear plan for their future. Some knew they wanted to achieve success at college and gain further qualifications, others were focussed on developing their skills in the workplace.
- Those pupils who attend the primary provision make good progress in their personal development. Highly effective strategies are used to support pupils' self-awareness and understanding of the impact of their actions on others.
- Pupils report that bullying is not a problem at this school. They say that if they had any concerns they know they would be quickly sorted out by the staff.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because pupils' attitudes to learning vary. When teachers plan work that is not well matched to abilities, pupils can become bored and go off task.
- While pupils' attendance when compared to their attendance at their previous schools has improved, it is still too low. This is particularly the case for a few pupils in key stage 4 who miss too much school.
- More positively, staff are highly trained and skilled in supporting pupils who face difficulty in managing their behaviour around the school. Records show that pupils who have been at the school for longer tend to behave better than new entrants. This indicates that over time, the school's system of behaviour management is effective.
- Pupils in the primary provision attend well. Behaviour is closely monitored and there is

clear evidence of the impact of the effective actions of staff to help pupils understand how to moderate their behaviour. Nearly every pupil has reintegrated back into mainstream school with no further exclusions after completion of the 12-week course.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Evidence seen in pupils' books and folders shows that the progress of pupils from their different starting points is often inconsistent. There is too much variation in the quality of teaching. Staff often do not sufficiently challenge pupils or set work at the right level.
- Funding for disadvantaged pupils has been spent on ensuring that more attend on a regular basis. While this undoubtedly improves progress, the school is less clear about the impact of the funding spent on other areas that they provide funding for, such as individual support programmes.
- Progress for those who have education, health and care plans is strong. This is because plans are accurate and include clearly achievable targets, which are carefully tracked by the SENCo. In common with the rest of the school, other pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make inconsistent progress because they are less carefully tracked.
- There is evidence that some most-able pupils make strong progress in art and design and photography. This is often because these subjects often capture pupils' imagination. The school has a good range of resources that help the most able pupils to achieve well in these subjects.
- Primary pupils are making strong progress because of the positive impact the provision has on their emotional well-being. Consequently, over their 12 weeks at the school pupils make accelerated progress in their reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the natural world. The school makes good use of both on- and off-site provision to give pupils a better understanding of wildlife and conservation. This is enhanced by topics in science, such as bee pollination. Some pupils have found this area so interesting that they have decided to continue their training at college with the aim of working in this sector.
- Most pupils gain recognised qualifications at the end of Year 11 that enable them to secure places at college or directly enter apprenticeships. Last year, most pupils passed a GCSE in English and mathematics as well as a range of other qualifications ranging from entry level to level 2 qualifications.

## School details

Unique reference number	135465
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10032492

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	8 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	86
Appropriate authority	The management committee
Chair	Alan Barham
Headteacher	Barbara Wallace
Telephone number	01622 753 772
Website	<a href="http://www.m-map.co.uk">www.m-map.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@cedars.kent.sch.uk">office@cedars.kent.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	19–20 September 2012

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about pupil premium and charging and remissions on its website.
- Maidstone and Malling Alternative Provision caters for pupils who have been permanently excluded or who are at risk of being excluded. The school operates on two sites, the main site is situated on Bower Mount Road and provides education for key stage 3 and 4 pupils. The other site, at Leybourne Chase, is for key stage 2 pupils. It provides nurturing support for six pupils.
- Pupils at both sites arrive throughout the year through a referral from the local authority. Pupils in key stages 2 and 3 have a 12-week placement and often return to mainstream school. A few move on to more specialist provision. Most pupils in key stage 4 stay until the end of Year 11.
- All pupils have some specific need associated with past schooling or personal circumstances. Many have social, emotional or mental health needs. A few pupils have an education, health and care plan, others are about to obtain one.

- Since the previous inspection the school has moved from the Palace Avenue site. Also, the number on roll has increased considerably from 28 to 86.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to the pupil premium is the above national average.
- Currently, a major redundancy and reorganisation procedure is taking place. This is due to be completed by the end of the academic year in July 2017.
- The school uses no alternative providers.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons, and conducted learning walks, often with members of the senior leadership team. Discussions were held with pupils about what it was like to be a pupil at this school. Inspectors looked at pupils' work in books and folders.
- Inspectors had meetings with the leadership team, staff, members of the management committee, an independent education consultant who works with the school, and a representative from the local authority. There were also telephone conversations with four parents. There were no responses to the Ofsted questionnaires of parents, pupils or staff.
- Inspectors reviewed documents including the school's self-evaluation, development plan, external reports, behaviour and incident logs, safeguarding records, lesson plans, examples of pupils' work and progress information.

## Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Hogarth	Ofsted Inspector

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