

# Inspection of a good school: Madresfield CofE Primary School

40 Madresfield Village, Madresfield, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 5AA

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Inspection date: 19 October 2021

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

This is a very caring school where attention to pupils' safety and well-being is second to none.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. In lessons, they listen to their teachers, work hard and help others. On the playground, they look out for one another. There are many rewards that recognise and celebrate this kind and thoughtful behaviour. Upsets and bullying are rare. Even so, pupils know that adults or other pupils will always help them if anything ever worries them. This ethos of care extends to the way leaders treat staff. Staff say they love working at the school and value the strong team spirit.

Staff promote reading well and adults often read aloud to the class. Pupils of all ages enjoy talking about the books they have read. Pupils produce quality work in English and mathematics. In other subjects, pupils do interesting things. However, there is more to do to make sure pupils learn everything that they should.

In recent times, the pandemic has halted after-school clubs and extra activities. The school has yet to get going again with these.

Fresh leadership is already making its mark, but now needs to press on with getting the full curriculum up to speed.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils and staff enjoy being at this school. Leaders care about everyone's welfare and have created a calm, positive environment where people feel included and valued. There are lots of routines and rewards that help all in the school community to feel good about themselves and their achievements. This attention to pastoral support shines out as a

major strength. It clearly helps to promote and maintain pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning.

The school has been through a lot of change. As well as the disruption caused by the pandemic, the leadership structure has altered, and new staff have joined. Throughout all of this, the attention to pastoral support has remained strong. However, there has been an impact on the curriculum and some things need to improve.

In reading and mathematics, standards have been maintained. The school has bought new resources to provide a more systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. In the early years, children get what they need to learn their letter sounds and prepare them for Year 1. Across the school, adults promote a love of reading very well. Pupils know about different authors and can talk about the books they like. Leaders know how well pupils are doing with reading. They give the right support at the right time to those who need it.

Progress in mathematics also presents well overall, although some pupils do not press on as well as they might. In science, staff have improved the way they plan learning and are working towards a quality mark.

In other subjects, the school has work to do to improve pupils' learning. Currently, pupils do lots of interesting activities but do not learn all the things that they need to. This is because curriculum plans do not provide enough guidance about what to teach when. Similarly, checks on learning focus more on general statements about what pupils can do rather than what they know.

Leaders know that curriculum plans in several subjects need improving. New subject leaders have been appointed and are still settling into their roles. Looking ahead, leaders need to give subject leaders the right training and support so they can make the necessary changes. They also need to ensure that all staff understand what proposed changes mean for their work.

From early years up to Year 6, pupils show kindness to one another. Adults are good role models and make sure pupils know the difference between right and wrong. The school's rules are fair and pupils have a say in shaping decisions. At this school, pupils grow in confidence. They learn to listen to others and care about their feelings.

Staff say that leaders are very mindful of their workload and welfare. Parents, too, express very positive views about the school. A few parents raised questions about the lack of extra-curricular activities at the moment. Leaders have started to take pupils out and about, for example to sports events. They plan to restart after-school clubs after the autumn 2021 half-term break.

The school and governors value opportunities to share expertise across the multi-academy trust (MAT). The local governing body and the MAT understand their roles in governance and have established systems for overseeing the school's work.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that curriculum design in subjects other than reading, mathematics and science may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are informed about the risks that pupils may face and know how to spot the warning signs. When necessary, they have acted correctly and shared the right information with the right people. Staff's training and records of checks on adults working in school are up to date. The school teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe and what to do if something is worrying them. Pupils say that they feel safe in school.

Medicines are kept in the right place and health and safety routines work as they should. Staff supervise pupils throughout the school day and help them if they are hurt or upset.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Curriculum plans in foundation subjects do not provide enough information about what should be taught and when. This means that pupils do not learn all the things they need to know in these subjects. Leaders should press ahead with their ambitions to improve plans so that staff have the guidance they need to teach the right things in the right order.
- Subject leadership is at an early stage. In part, this is because some staff are new to their role. It is also because subject leadership is not well established at the school. Consequently, the impact of the curriculum is not routinely or consistently evaluated. Leaders should make sure subject leaders have enough training and support to enable them to carry out their roles effectively.
- The disruption caused by the pandemic halted after-school clubs and some other extra activities that the school used to provide. Many of these paused activities support pupils' personal development and enrich the curriculum. Now that restrictions have eased, leaders should aim to restart these aspects as soon as it is practically possible to do so.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns

about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Madresfield CofE Primary School, to be good in January 2013.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144259
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10201011
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	99
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Hugh Richards
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michelle Waits
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.madresfieldschool.net">www.madresfieldschool.net</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy in May 2017. It is one of 15 schools in the Diocese of Worcester Multi-Academy Trust (DOWMAT). It is a Church of England school.
- The current head of school took up her post in September 2020. An executive headteacher was appointed at the same time. The executive headteacher oversees two other DOWMAT schools.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During the inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and science. In these subjects, inspectors visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, examined teachers' plans and talked with pupils and staff about the way the subjects were planned and taught. They also looked at plans in some other subjects and had conversations with staff and pupils to find out how these subjects were organised and taught.

- The lead inspector looked at 2019 external performance data about the school and examined school documents. These included information about behaviour, the school curriculum and attendance. He also checked the school’s website.
- Inspectors asked pupils, staff, leaders and governors about safeguarding arrangements. The lead inspector examined the record of employment checks on school staff and looked at other school records. He also checked safety procedures and routines at the school.
- Inspectors watched pupils’ behaviour in class, at lunchtime, on the playground and at other times during the day.
- During the inspection, inspectors had formal meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school, other leaders, staff and governors. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of DOWMAT, a trustee and the MAT’s school improvement leader. Inspectors talked informally with pupils, staff and parents to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors considered the recent responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaires for staff and pupils.

## **Inspection team**

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Diana Pearce

Ofsted Inspector

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