

Inspection of Maldon Primary School

Wantz Chase, Maldon, Essex CM9 5DQ

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have mixed feelings about school. While many speak enthusiastically about sign language club and the opportunity to be a play ambassador, they also tire of the 'clownish' behaviour of some pupils in lessons. Pupils report that as the day progresses, some pupils' behaviour deteriorates.

Pupils respond well to their lessons in English and mathematics, concentrating and following teachers' instructions closely. This is not the case across the wider curriculum. Pupils say they want to learn but are disrupted by the antics of their classmates. Too often, pupils find the lessons boring and so choose to misbehave. In contrast, children in early years learn in a calm and productive environment. Parents commented to inspectors on how happy and settled their children are in Reception.

Pupils say that they feel safe and that there is little bullying. However, numerous pupils spoke of name-calling, arguing and incidents of pupils being mean to one another. While pupils trust adults to stop such behaviour, they say it starts up again. Just over half the pupils who responded to the Ofsted pupil survey agreed that they would recommend the school.

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

Trust leaders identified that the quality of education is not where it should be, and that leaders are not addressing concerns with safeguarding quickly enough. A rapid recovery programme is in place and is having impact. Leaders have focused on getting the curriculum right for the delivery of the basics. Staff have received training and are confident in their teaching of English, mathematics and science.

Children in Reception who are learning to read follow a systematic phonics programme which supports them well. Staff are well trained to teach the chosen phonics programme. They do so effectively. Pupils read books that match their reading abilities. Pupils who need extra support are quickly identified and given further practice, which helps them to catch up. Similarly, in mathematics and science, leaders carefully consider how pupils' knowledge and skills develop over time. Teachers give pupils regular opportunities to revisit learning so that they easily recall key concepts.

The curriculum in other subjects is not as precisely designed. In some subjects, work to establish exactly what pupils should learn is in its early stages. Trust leaders have bought in commercial schemes in some subjects, which helps the development of staff's subject knowledge and delivery. However, this is a work in progress and there is a lot more to do. This includes in the early years, where the planning for children's personal and emotional development lacks cohesion.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is improving but remains too uneven. Staff receive ongoing training and are better placed to meet pupils' needs in the core subjects. Pupils' individual plans are more

precise and give clear guidance to adults about the support required in English and mathematics. This is not the case for other subjects. Additional support sessions for pupils with SEND can, sometimes, limit the breadth and quality of their experience across the wider curriculum.

Staff struggle to support pupils who have complex behavioural needs. Most staff who responded to the Ofsted staff survey were of the view that they are not supported adequately to deal with behaviour. There is a high rate of behaviour incidents and suspensions. The reasons for exclusion include violent and aggressive behaviour, including physical assault.

While the personal development curriculum is comprehensive and meets requirements, leaders' systems for checking that pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of the key messages are underdeveloped. In some instances, pupils are not demonstrating the values they are learning. Some pupils lack respect for their teachers and for each other. This is not the case in all classes. In early years, children play well together. They take turns, share their equipment and listen closely to their peers and to adults. Children benefit from a well-resourced outdoor area which promotes their physical development well.

Leaders know that the status quo is not currently working. Current systems are not helping leaders to check well enough what is working and what is not. Some staff are not happy, citing heavy workload and stress. To increase capacity and support leaders, trust leaders have allocated additional resource, with the deployment of extra staff from the trust.

Over time, governors have challenged the information leaders provide. They have questioned senior leaders' conclusions and noted that leaders' self-evaluation is too generous. Governors ensure they gain other views of the school, either by checking through visiting the school themselves, through trust personnel visits or through external consultants.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders are not responding to concerns raised by staff or other agencies in a timely way. When they receive notifications, leaders do not routinely check on the welfare and well-being of the most vulnerable pupils. Sometimes, leaders will make decisions that are not in the best interests of the pupil, such as suspensions. Staff are not following government guidance when they undertake intimate care.

Record-keeping is not robust. There is a lack of detail in some records. There are gaps where leaders have not recorded communications.

Pupils learn how to stay safe online. However, some older pupils do not follow the advice. Their use of inappropriate apps for their age, and virtually trading with strangers while gaming, is leaving them open to risk.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's procedures for sharing and recording information about safeguarding are not robust. Information about pupils' welfare and communications with other professionals are either missing or not recorded in detail. Leaders and governors must urgently review and improve arrangements for noting, reporting and sharing information about pupils' welfare and safety.
- Staff, including leaders, are not following closely government guidance for safeguarding. Staff are not undertaking intimate care procedures correctly. Leaders are not routinely 'touching base' to check on the welfare and well-being of the most vulnerable pupils. Trust leaders need to urgently run further safeguarding training so that all staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities for the safeguarding of children.
- The curriculum is not fully designed to show what should be taught in each year group and when, in each subject. Nor is it clear how the curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics can be adapted so that pupils with SEND can excel. As a result, pupils are not learning a rich and ambitious wider curriculum. Senior leaders know the improvements that are needed. They should ensure these are secured as soon as possible, including ensuring greater cohesion in the early years curriculum for personal and emotional development.
- Too many pupils do not behave well in some lessons. Some staff say that the behaviour policy is confusing. Most staff are of the view that they are not supported to deal with some pupils' complex behaviour. Senior leaders need to review the behaviour policy, provide training where necessary and ensure that staff are supported to manage challenging behaviour.
- Leaders are unclear as to the extent to which pupils absorb important messages put across through the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. Some pupils lack understanding and this limits their ability to make informed decisions about how to conduct themselves and be safe. Senior leaders need to review and understand why this is, making alterations to the PSHE curriculum where necessary.
- There are weaknesses in senior leadership. Leaders are not sufficiently clear on what is working well and what is not. This means that problems, such as behaviour, become worse as issues are not 'nipped in the bud' as they arise. Trust leaders need to support senior leaders in reviewing and tightening systems so that they are better informed.

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

Unique reference number	143122
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10212079
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gaenor Anne Bagley
Headteacher	Eileen Thorn
Website	https://sites.google.com/maldon-tkat.org/maldon-primary-school
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Maldon Primary School joined The Kemnal Academies Trust in September 2017. The headteacher of the school joined in November 2019.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- There is a breakfast club for pupils who attend school.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke with the director of primary schools from the multi-academy trust, the chair of the local governing board, the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and pupils about the school's provision.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at less structured times.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science and physical education to evaluate the quality of education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, considered curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and scrutinised samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at the curriculum plans for other subjects and spoke with pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors considered the provision for: PSHE; relationships, sex and health education; and religious education.
- Inspectors met with the leader in charge of SEND and scrutinised documentation for SEND. Inspectors observed support for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's information on behaviour, bullying and attendance. Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records and spoke with the trust director of primary schools, the chair of the local governing board, leaders, staff and pupils about safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors considered the 46 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the 30 free-text comments. Inspectors considered the 29 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 44 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Liz Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Lucas

Her Majesty's Inspector

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