

Inspection of Maidenbower Infant School

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

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils arrive every day excited and eager to meet their friends in this caring and happy school. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and respectful. The atmosphere around classrooms and corridors is calm and harmonious. The school values of curiosity, respect, kindness and ambition are part and parcel of everyday life. Pupils feel safe. Playtimes are happy occasions. For example, older pupils set up games for others to enjoy. Pupils take time to relax in the sensory den and outdoor reading area. They are clear that staff deal with any incidents of bullying or poor behaviour quickly.

Pupils learn about the importance of exercise and healthy eating. They know how to look after their mental health. Younger children talk maturely about their achievements and feelings. They proudly showcase their work on the 'Proud Patch'.

Clubs such as 'multi sports' and 'rhythm masters' help pupils develop their interests. Pupils learn to look after the environment. They relish their roles as eco-warriors, playground angels and monitors. Trips to museums, the planetarium and art galleries bring learning to life.

Pupils have not learned as well as they might. Leaders' work to develop the curriculum is not as honed as they would like it to be.

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

New leaders understand how pupils learn and how the curriculum should be structured. They are taking the right steps to identify precisely what pupils must remember, and they use curriculum leaders effectively to support teachers to develop strong subject knowledge. Where this work is already completed, for example in mathematics and physical education (PE), teachers know exactly what to teach and what to revisit so that pupils remember key learning. They check what pupils know through quizzes and games. They revisit any areas where pupils' knowledge is less secure. However, there is still work to do to improve the curriculum in a number of subjects to deepen pupils' learning. Leaders are working hard to ensure all pupils benefit from the curriculum by attending regularly.

Any pupils who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers know how to help pupils with SEND by, for example, breaking topics down into smaller steps. Leaders carefully monitor any additional support for pupils with SEND to make sure it is effective.

Leaders keep the teaching of early reading high on their agenda. A new phonics programme was introduced during the last school year. This is being taught well. In early years and Year 1, pupils are at the right stage for their age. Staff are becoming experts in early reading. They notice if any pupil falls behind and give them the extra help they need to keep up. Pupils read books that match the sounds they are

learning. They also enjoy choosing books from class reading areas or the well-stocked school library. Leaders match high-quality stories, poems and information texts to topic areas to ensure pupils learn important new vocabulary. Pupils put their new vocabulary to use in discussions and debates. However, there are some older pupils whose reading is not as fluent as it should be because they did not benefit from effective phonics teaching from the word go.

Children in early years thrive in all areas of the curriculum. Staff know children well and what they need to learn next. They skilfully plan learning which sparks children's interest. For example, children are fascinated when testing how ice melts using their first-hand experience. Staff interact with pupils to awaken their curiosity by asking 'I wonder' questions to promote discussion.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development well. Pupils regularly collect donations for charities they support. They learn about different religions, cultures and festivals. Pupils debate topics such as fairness and equality. They use their democratic voice to elect members of the school council. Pupils understand how people are different and the importance of individual choice. As one Year 2 pupil said, 'Everyone is different and that is what makes us special.' They are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn how to take care of their physical and mental health. They know the importance of eating healthy meals and exercising. Children in Nursery are encouraged to reflect and relax in the sensory den.

Governors have a strong strategic vision for the school. They have a clear understanding of the school's priorities and areas that need to improve further. Governors provide leaders with an effective balance of support and challenge. They are committed to all staff having the training they need so that pupils get the best teaching possible. Staff value being supported to develop the curriculum. They feel motivated and appreciated by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure all staff are well trained. There is a strong culture of vigilance in all areas. Staff are knowledgeable about risks in the local area and know how to report the slightest concerns they might have. Leaders act swiftly when concerns are reported. They work well with external agencies, so pupils and their families have the help and support they need. Leaders carry out rigorous checks to make sure that adults are qualified to work with children. Pupils learn about healthy relationships. They know how to keep safe when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of the curriculum, leaders have only recently determined the exact

progression of knowledge and skills. As a result, pupils are not always able to remember previous learning and make links with new learning. Leaders should continue with their work to make sure that teachers know what and how they should be teaching in all subjects.

- Some older pupils did not experience a high-quality early reading curriculum when they started school. They do not read with the fluency and comprehension expected for their age. Leaders should continue to ensure expert support for all pupils so they can read well enough to access the curriculum.

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.

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	125962
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10256339
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Milan Jayasuriya
Headteacher	Laura Roberts
Website	www.maidenbowerinfantschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 September 2009

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up her post in September 2022.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders. An inspector met with governors, including the chair of governors. She also met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about

their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records and interviewing staff, and through discussions with pupils.
- The views of parents and carers were considered through their responses to Ofsted Parent View. Further views of pupils and staff were gathered through Ofsted's online surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors met with school leaders about safeguarding arrangements and attendance.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documents, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance records and behaviour incident logs.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at playtimes. They spoke with pupils about bullying and leaders' expectations of pupils' behaviour.

Inspection team

Jo Brinkley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kate Fripp

His Majesty's Inspector

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