

# Inspection of Maldon Primary School

Wantz Chase, Maldon, Essex CM9 5DQ

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Inspection dates: 18 and 19 July 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils attend a school that has been on a rapid and sustainable journey of improvement. They are honest with their insights about this. Pupils recognise how leaders and staff have worked together to raise expectations about coming to school, behaving well and working hard. It means the school is now a place where pupils are happy and learning more to prepare them for the future.

Pupils can identify how behaviour keeps getting better. They are very enthused by the 'ticks and crosses' system, trying hard to build up their ticks for the positive recognition they receive. The simple phrases staff use, like 'marvellous manners' and 'wonderful walking', show in pupils' typically polite and calm conduct around school.

Pupils benefit greatly from the assemblies and lessons that teach them how to stay safe. The details they remember is impressive, such as what the flag on a beach tells them about swimming in the water, or how to administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation to keep someone alive. In addition, pupils trust that sharing their worries with adults in school will result in the adults taking action to resolve issues. This aspect of the school's work is exceptional and ensures that every pupil is kept safe.

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

New and existing leaders have galvanised school improvement. They worked strategically to ensure that the school as it was then is not the school as it is now. Pupils, parents and staff recognise this. They are proud of what a happy, welcoming school it has become.

Leaders, including trust leaders and local governors, have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They identify and iron out issues quickly. For example, leaders recognised that pupils' attendance and behaviour were not good enough. As a result, leaders introduced clear, robust systems for identifying and addressing attendance and behavioural concerns. Because of this, more pupils now attend school regularly and behave well.

Leaders worked at pace to develop the curriculum. They elected to adopt high-quality schemes of work. Doing so gave teachers access to training, plans, resources and assessment materials. They value these, along with the coaching provided by staff from the trust. This support has helped them to grow in confidence because they are clear about the content that pupils need to learn and how best to teach it.

Nevertheless, some pupils have gaps in the knowledge that should have been previously secured. This is because they did not experience the same ambitious curriculums before this school year. Consequently, some pupils struggle to explain, for example, the difference between countries and continents. There are systems in place to address these gaps. Teachers highlight what pupils should know before

teaching a new topic. However, the brief recapping is not enough to help some pupils to remember important concepts.

Leaders have introduced a rigorous phonics programme. They ensure that all staff access training and materials to teach the programme as intended. A leader provides coaching during lessons, correcting any shortfalls in staff's practice. Consequently, pupils' achievement in phonics continues to improve. For older pupils, frequent reading comprehension lessons mean they retrieve information and define vocabulary with increasing confidence.

Leaders, including those from the trust, oversee strong systems for identifying and arranging support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In the main, the extra help ensures that pupils do well. However, for some pupils, particularly those with SEND, staff do not always notice and quickly put right the mistakes that pupils make. Some pupils, for example, struggle to form letters, but staff do not always explain clearly how they themselves form their letters to guide pupils to do this better.

Children get off to a solid start in the Reception Year. Leaders have worked carefully to pinpoint the 'core knowledge' children need to know ready for Year 1. For example, in Reception, children learn that seeds grow into plants. Following this, in Year 1, they learn to identify the parts of a flowering plant. Arrangements for transition from pre-school or a child's home are well considered, quickly identifying those children who require support. Staff find innovative ways to instil the behaviours they wish to see. For instance, they use dinosaur characters like the 'Tryatops' to teach children to try their best and not give up.

The personal development programme caters for pupils' needs well. There is a comprehensive mentoring programme for disadvantaged pupils. This helps them to overcome obstacles that might hold them back. The school's work to support young carers is nationally recognised. This year, local governors sourced funding to reintroduce the Year 6 pupils' residential trip. Pupils learned lots from being outdoors and completing teambuilding exercises. Trying new things and being independent set them up well for starting secondary school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established an exceptional culture of safeguarding. Their systems for safer recruitment are thorough and efficient. There is a comprehensive training programme for all. Eagle-eyed staff spot, report and record their concerns about pupils without delay. Leaders' persistence to protect pupils is second to none. They maintain an in-depth understanding of how safeguarding partners function, using this to secure suitable support swiftly. In addition, record-keeping clearly captures how leaders and staff leave no stone unturned to protect pupils.

Pupils are expert in how to keep themselves safe. This is due to the important content that is regularly revisited across a range of themes.

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

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

- Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge that were acquired before the curriculum was improved. Although staff refer to concepts pupils should have learned previously, not enough explanation and revision is provided to ensure that pupils remember these. Leaders should train staff in how to support pupils effectively to learn key concepts they have missed out on.
- Some staff do not always adapt lessons to provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn and practise key skills. As a result, pupils' difficulties, principally with writing, take longer to resolve than they should. Leaders should ensure that staff have the skills they need to address pupils' barriers to learning efficiently and well.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143122
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290733
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	212
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Gaenor Bagley
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Deborah Conroy
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sites.google.com/maldon-tkat.org/maldon-primary-school">www.sites.google.com/maldon-tkat.org/maldon-primary-school</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Maldon Primary School has been part of The Kemnal Academies Trust, a multi-academy trust, since September 2017.
- When Maldon Primary School was inspected in February 2022, it was judged to have serious weaknesses. Subsequently, the school received two monitoring inspections, one in July 2022 and one in March 2023. At the last monitoring inspection, leaders were judged to have made progress to improve the school, but more work was necessary for the category of concern to be removed.
- The substantive executive headteacher took up post in September 2022. Prior to this, there was an interim executive headteacher, who worked in the school from April to July 2022.
- There is before- and after-school childcare for pupils attending the school. It is run by school staff and managed by school leaders.
- Leaders do not currently make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, including the executive headteacher, assistant headteacher and the chair of the local governing body. Inspectors also held meetings with trust leaders and staff, and with the senior director of primary education, a regional special educational needs coordinator and a lead practitioner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To further inspect the curriculum, inspectors met with leaders to discuss the early years curriculum and the subject curriculums for English, music and history. This included reviewing curriculum documentation and scrutinising a small selection of pupils' workbooks. Inspectors also discussed these aspects of provision with pupils.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and a deputy DSL to discuss policy and procedures, as well as to review samples of safeguarding records. The lead inspector also met with the school business manager to scrutinise the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. Inspectors also discussed safeguarding with local governors, staff, pupils and parents.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of other school documentation and policies, including minutes of trustees' meetings, minutes of local governors' meetings and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors took account of the views of pupils, parents and staff. This involved holding discussions with many of them, as well as considering the 28 responses to Ofsted's survey for school pupils and the 19 responses to Ofsted's survey for school staff.

## Inspection team

Daniel Short, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Chris Stainsby

His Majesty's Inspector

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