

Inspection of Maidstone and Malling Alternative Provision

Bower Mount Road, Maidstone, Kent ME16 8AU

Inspection dates: 5–6 November 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very happy at this school. They know staff really care about them and want them to do well. Pupils told inspectors that this school is much better than where they were before. They feel listened to and report always having the help they need to achieve good qualifications. Pupils appreciate that their opinions have helped leaders with a number of decisions, for example designing the new school uniform and logo.

The leaders and staff share the same passion and are committed to support the pupils. They strongly feel that every pupil, despite their various challenging circumstances, should have the opportunity to have a second chance to be successful.

Pupils say that bullying rarely happens at school. Pupils have an excellent relationship with staff; they know they can speak to staff if they are worried about anything.

The physical education (PE) curriculum is highly valued by the pupils. They find the variety of sports including skiing, tobogganing and climbing very motivating. Pupils enjoy trying these activities. Pupils also value the numerous trips, including visits to the theatre, art galleries and food shopping, to learn about health and well-being.

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

All pupils at the school have a variety of special educational needs; some of these are associated with past schooling or personal circumstances. Pupils have had a say in the subjects they learn. Leaders take pupils' views into account to plan interesting and relevant learning. Pupils develop the emotional, social and independent skills they need to succeed. When the pupils join, the school teachers take the time to find out precisely what pupils know in each subject. Teachers plan lessons to make sure they cover any gaps in pupils' knowledge. Well-trained staff skilfully provide pupils with individual support to help them succeed. Leaders and staff are ambitious and support pupils to leave with qualifications that are relevant for their future destinations. Pupils are motivated to learn and enjoy their lessons.

Many pupils arrive at the school with poor literacy levels. Improving pupils' literacy, particularly reading, skills is a top priority for the school. The English leader provides useful guidance and training for staff to sharpen their literacy teaching. English is now promoted in a range of subjects, not just in lessons with a literacy focus. Leaders know that there is more work to do to ensure that this approach is consistent across all subjects.

Pupils joining the school have often not attended school regularly in the past. Well-considered monitoring systems and personal support from dedicated staff ensure that pupils' non-attendance is followed up rigorously. Leaders work creatively and

proactively with parents, carers and other agencies to encourage pupils to attend. As a result, attendance improves for many pupils. One pupil proudly told us that he has not missed a day since he joined the school. Despite these positive developments, some pupils still do not attend school regularly enough.

Pupils' behaviour in the past, and at their previous schools, had stopped them from learning. Leaders have introduced a new behaviour system that promotes positive behaviour effectively. Pupils earn rewards when they do well. As a result, pupils are ready to work and motivated to do their best.

Staff prepare pupils exceptionally well for when they leave the school. All pupils who left last year are still in college, work-based learning or employment with training. Pupils' well-being is at the heart of the work in the school. The personal, social health and economic education (PSHE), careers and citizenship programmes are incredibly well thought out. Leaders have planned the curriculum to ensure that pupils' personal development is prioritised.

Parents are very happy with the school. One parent who responded to Ofsted's Parent View survey said, 'This school in my opinion is fantastic. They are caring, kind, and very fair and do everything within their power, to ensure my child is safe, happy, and well cared for.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

School leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and highly robust. Safeguarding training is regular and thorough. School staff know their pupils and families well and are vigilant for any indicators that child protection is needed. When required, the school acts promptly in making safeguarding referrals and is persistent in chasing these up and escalating them if necessary.

All parents and staff who completed the Ofsted online surveys believe that the school keeps pupils safe. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school and they are taught how to stay safe online and in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Attendance has improved because leaders have worked creatively and proactively with parents and outside agencies to support pupils to attend school. However, leaders recognise that some pupils need to attend more regularly. Leaders need to continue to be uncompromising in their approach to improve attendance, particularly for the hard to reach pupils.
- Pupils often arrive at the school with poor literacy skills, particularly reading. As a result, improving literacy skills and fostering pupils' love of reading is a whole-

school priority. The English lead has developed a literacy strategy. This needs more time to be fully embedded across all subjects. This will allow pupils to easily access all areas of the curriculum and help them in their future destinations.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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're 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	135465
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10111132
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Appropriate authority	Kent
Headteacher	Tina Hamer (executive headteacher), Stacie Smith (headteacher)
Website	www.m-map.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 June 2017

Information about this school

- The school offers places to pupils in key stages 3 and 4 who have been permanently excluded, are at risk of permanent exclusion, or have become disengaged from learning in mainstream education.
- Pupils arrive throughout the year through a referral from the local authority, or from the local inclusion forum. Pupils in key stage 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.
- A few pupils have an education, health and care plan; others are about to obtain one.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.
- The school provides a free breakfast club for pupils.
- Since the last inspection, there has been a new leadership team, consisting of an executive headteacher and acting head of school.

Information about this inspection

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

- We held meetings with the executive headteacher, acting head of school, senior leaders, middle leaders, the management committee and with a representative of the local authority.
- We reviewed safeguarding procedures in place at the school, including the single central record and child protection and safeguarding policies. We met with the designated leader of safeguarding.
- We took account of five responses recorded on Ofsted’s Parent View survey, including four associated free-text comments. We also spoke to four parents on the telephone.
- The views of staff were gathered through meetings with groups of staff and by considering the 16 responses to Ofsted’s online staff questionnaire.
- We spoke to pupils in lessons and in small groups after lessons. The views of pupils were also considered from the 10 responses to Ofsted’s online pupil questionnaire.
- We looked at a range of documentation including: the school’s self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; information relating to the attendance and behaviour of pupils; the curriculum; and minutes of the management committee meetings.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, art and PE. We met with subject leaders, teachers and groups of pupils. We visited lessons and looked at pupils’ work.

Inspection team

Susan Conway, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Simon Yates

Ofsted Inspector

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