

Maple Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102577
Local Authority	Kingston-upon-Thames
Inspection number	335928
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Barbara Atcheson

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	280
Appropriate authority	Governing Body
Chair	Sheila Mitchell
Head Teacher	Liz Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	15 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, pupils and parents and carers. They observed ten teachers and spent six hours looking at pupils' learning. They looked at the quality of monitoring, improvement planning and other key documents. Inspectors also considered the 165 questionnaires received from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of groups of pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 1, to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging
- the effectiveness of leaders at all levels in raising standards and bringing about a consistency of good teaching and learning.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized infant school. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals is below the national average. Half of the pupils are of White British heritage. The remainder are from a wide variety of minority ethnic groups. More than a third of the children are learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children with special educational needs is below the national average. Their needs mainly relate to speech, language and communication difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, or autism. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage into a Nursery and three Reception classes.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This good school has some outstanding features. The headteacher and her two assistant headteachers are totally committed to continuous improvement in order to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can. As a result, the school has maintained its track record of good attainment from the last inspection, despite the events of last year when everything appeared to conspire against this. A significant number of more able pupils moved away and there was an influx of new pupils, a high proportion of whom were vulnerable or had considerable special needs. There was also a short period when there was a small proportion of satisfactory teaching. The high quality of care, support and guidance, which is at the heart of the school, together with high expectations of pupils' academic and personal growth, ensured that the situation was quickly recovered and pupils made the best use of the good opportunities provided for them.

These are the key factors which demonstrate the school's good capacity for continued improvement and how well the school meets the needs of all pupils.

- Pupils make good progress and attain above average standards. They are motivated and say their work is interesting and enjoyable.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are very thoughtful, kind and supportive of each other. They have a very good understanding of what makes a healthy lifestyle and play a strong role in the life of the school.
- A good level of safeguarding ensures that pupils feel very secure and their awareness of safety is extremely strong.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in their personal and academic development because there are so many exciting opportunities for them to learn and develop new skills, both in and out of doors.
- Teaching is good because teachers have high expectations and good subject knowledge. However, the written guidance given to pupils on how they can improve their work is not always as specific as it could be.
- A creative curriculum promotes positive links between subjects. Attendance is above average. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school.
- Links with parents and carers are outstanding and they appreciate the high level of care, guidance and support their children receive.

The school's accurate use of self-evaluation ensures that the well-considered plan for improvement is focused on the right priorities. Robust, effective target setting and monitoring of pupils' progress ensures that support and intervention are effective.

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Senior leaders work hard and share the headteacher's enthusiasm for continual improvement. However, the strategic role of middle managers in improving the quality of pupil outcomes and the quality of teaching and learning is underdeveloped and this limits what senior leaders know they can achieve. The high professional calibre of the governing body is helpful and members play an influential role in determining the strategic direction of the school. The school promotes community cohesion well within its local community and globally. However, nationally, its attempts to find a school in a contrasting location to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of how other people live have so far been unsuccessful.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teachers' marking, by the end of the spring term 2010, through ensuring that all teachers:
 - mark according to the learning objective
 - help pupils identify their next steps in learning.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by September 2010, through:
 - developing the roles and responsibilities of middle managers
 - ensuring that middle managers take a strategic lead in improving achievement and the quality of teaching and learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy lessons where the teaching is focused and purposeful and they can play an active role in their learning. In a Year 2 lesson on letter sounds and guided reading, pupils made outstanding progress because, although the teacher insisted on accuracy, her quiet, kindly manner also gave the pupils confidence to blend letter sounds into words. Pupils make good progress in Year 1 because well-planned transition arrangements from the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure that pupils have the opportunity to practise and develop new skills in an active way. This was seen in a lesson where pupils delighted in developing their speaking and listening skills as customers and shopkeepers in the toy shop.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support and make progress at a similar rate to their peers. Their learning is tailor-made to their specific needs and teaching assistants are skilled in structuring the small steps that lead to good progress. Small group work using visual clues ensures that pupils with English as an additional language have the right skills to make good progress. All class teachers have a class profile and have responsibility for checking on the progress of different groups. As this is checked in turn by senior leaders it ensures that a close eye is kept on the outcomes for different groups and that their needs are met effectively. The majority of pupils eligible for free school meals, who were the group who made least progress over the last year, were either newcomers with a history of disrupted education, vulnerable pupils or pupils who had specific special needs. The school has recognised that historically, boys have not achieved as well as

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girls. However, boys' enthusiasm for learning has increased with the introduction of 'boy-friendly' topics and an increase in outdoor and active learning.

The positive ethos that results from the very good care that the pupils receive and the excellent role models that staff provide enable pupils to develop excellent personal qualities. They work and play harmoniously. They say there is very little bullying and know that there will always be someone who will listen to them. Pupils are very knowledgeable about how to stay safe. They have an exceptionally good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy a healthy choice at lunchtime and fruit for their break. They are proud to be members of the school council and enjoy talking about the contribution they made to raising funds for 'The Landirani Trust', a local charity. Excellent behaviour and above average attendance contribute well to their good achievement.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Effective use of assessment by teachers who use their own good subject knowledge successfully ensures that learning is well structured and planned to meet the needs of all pupils regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability. In a Year 2 numeracy lesson, which had good links to literacy and information and communication technology, pupils really enjoyed the challenge of calculating the right number of items for Mrs Twit's party. The teacher recalled those who identified they were not confident in their learning. Once he had ensured that their knowledge and understanding of how to apply the 2 and 5 times tables was secure, they successfully tackled the problem-solving element.

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Parents recognise that where teachers use the school's excellent resources creatively, they provide exciting activities with meaningful links between subjects which reinforce pupils' learning. One parent, reflecting the views of many, said: 'The staff are inventive and inspire our children.' Although the outdoor space is small in area, it is well planned with areas such as 'Pirates and Islands' which provide plenty of opportunities for active learning which is particularly enjoyed by the boys. Pupils understand how well they have done and what they have to do to improve their work when teachers mark with reference to the learning objective and help pupils to recognise their next steps in learning. However, not all of the teachers do this and this slows the progress that some pupils make.

Vulnerable pupils receive valuable support which enables them to make good progress in developing social and life skills. The school's exceptional work with these pupils, their families and a range of agencies ensures that they make the best of the opportunities provided by the school. Strong relationships and very effective care and guidance enable all pupils to benefit from the wide range of experiences that the school offers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and two assistant headteachers form a strong team which has driven forward the important improvements that have maintained a good level of achievement throughout the school. Regular monitoring ensures that they know the school well. Initiatives such as the transition of children from Early Years Foundation Stage into Year 1, more active learning for boys and ensuring that class teachers know the progress of different groups within their class are successful because the implementation has been monitored. All three of these initiatives, together with the successful outcomes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language, clearly demonstrate the school's effective commitment to equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination.

The two assistant headteachers are outstanding practitioners in their own right and the coaching that they have given to staff has ensured a consistency of good and some outstanding teaching. However, the strategic role of middle managers in the improvement of pupils' achievement and in the quality of teaching and learning is underdeveloped. The school recognises that this is an important area for

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development in order to strengthen and increase the rate of improvement within the school. Governors make sure that they are well informed and they, too, know the school well. They challenge and support where and when necessary and have played important roles in the debate about amalgamation, the appointments of staff and the development of the site. Procedures for safeguarding are good, and effective in ensuring that all pupils feel safe and that their emotional and social needs are met. Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough and child protection arrangements are secure and updated regularly. Given the outcomes for pupils, the school provides good value for money.

Senior leaders promote good levels of community cohesion, particularly in relation to pupils' involvement in the school and the local community. Strong links with a local special school help pupils to gain a unique understanding of the difficulties these pupils face, which nurtures an ethos of mutual respect. A member of staff's forthcoming visit to a primary school in Malawi will strengthen the school's link. This association has helped pupils understand that there are similarities such as enjoying a game of football, but differences such as using a ball made out of rubber bands bring a realisation that life in Malawi is very different. Well-considered plans are in hand to implement a strategy for broadening pupils' appreciation of life in a different part of the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into the routines of school life because they are well cared for, safe and secure. They achieve well in all areas of learning and the majority attain the levels above those expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year. However, not all Nursery children go on to Reception and half of Reception children

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come from other settings.

Classrooms and outside areas are extremely well resourced and teachers are very talented at providing rich and exciting opportunities for children to explore and investigate. This means that they make good progress in building skills and knowledge in all six areas of learning. For example, children delighted in using their hands to mix oats, red jelly, real snow and ice cubes for Goldilocks' porridge. Well-framed questions by the teacher helped them discover the properties of each material and which is soft and which is hard. A table covered in white fur fabric attracted a large number of children who spent a long time reasoning how to sort the brightly coloured, differently textured objects into hard and soft, consolidating their understanding of the words from the Goldilocks story. Warm snowsuits enabled children to go outside to draw in the snow and make snow castles while keeping warm and dry. Short daily sessions are effective in helping children to secure their letter sounds. The majority of the Nursery children knew the 't' sound because they had really enjoyed crawling through a tunnel, making glittery 't' badges and bringing objects from home for the tin.

The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has effectively ensured that what the children do in school is related to their individual needs. Consequently, the children benefit from good provision for their welfare, learning and development.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers have positive views of the school. They are particularly pleased with the caring, friendly and welcoming ethos. Evidence from the inspection supports parents' and carers' views that children enjoy school and feel very safe in school. However, a few voiced concerns over the level of supervision of children at playtimes. The inspection team found that children play safely and happily and that, although levels of supervision varied, they were satisfactory.

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Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Maple Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 165 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 280 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	118	72	45	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	88	53	72	44	3	2	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	51	31	99	60	13	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	62	38	88	53	6	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	84	51	77	47	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	63	38	84	51	12	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	68	41	85	52	5	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	59	36	68	41	8	5	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	64	39	78	47	12	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	27	91	55	10	6	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	32	79	48	9	5	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	76	46	77	47	2	1	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	94	57	65	39	4	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.



15 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Maple Infant School, Surbiton KT6 4AL

Thank you for being so friendly when we came to your school. We enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to you. You really helped us. We think your school gives you a good standard of education and there are quite a lot of things your school does very well. These are the main things that helped us come to this conclusion.

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a good start because they enjoy exciting activities and are taught well.
- You really enjoy school, behave very well and come to school regularly.
- Teaching is good. Teachers work hard to make learning fun. However, not all of the teachers' marking tells you how you can improve your work.
- You achieve higher levels than those expected for your age.
- The school provides interesting lessons and a wide range of extra activities.
- You have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and really know how to keep safe.
- The teachers look after you very well.
- Your headteacher and her staff have made sure that the school is safe and they are working hard to make learning better for you.

We have asked the school to do two things.

- Help you to do even better by making sure that:
 - teachers' marking refers to your learning objective and tells you exactly how to improve.
- Make sure that senior leaders make things even better for you by:
 - training some of the teachers to lead improvement in achievement, and teaching and learning, so that you can do even better than you are already doing.

We hope that you will all continue to enjoy coming to school and try your hardest so that you are successful in the future.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Atcheson
Lead inspector

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