

# Maplewood School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131915
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	381423
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29 February–1 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Charles Hackett

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	54
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	8
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jeanette Hyder
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Rumble
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2–3 December 2008
<b>School address</b>	Faulkner Way Downley High Wycombe HP13 5HB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01494525728
<b>Fax number</b>	019494441546
<b>Email address</b>	office@maplewood.bucks.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	2–19
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	29 February–1 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	381423



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012



## Introduction

Inspection team

Charles Hackett

Additional inspector

Jackie Blount

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors saw 11 lessons, observing ten teachers, visited an assembly and undertook learning walks where they visited several lessons, at both the lower school site and Kite Ridge House. Meetings were held with staff, the local authority senior school improvement officer and two members of the governing body. Discussions were held with pupils about their work and views of the centre and one pupil read to an inspector.

The inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the centre's work and looked at pupils' work and information on their progress; safeguarding policies and other documents were evaluated. Questionnaires completed by 28 parents and carers, 36 staff and six pupils were scrutinised.

## Information about the school

Maplewood School educates pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many have associated physical, sensory, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils are educated on three sites. The youngest pupils, those in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, are educated at the lower school site situated in the village of Downley. Older students in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form are educated in a purpose-designed building approximately two miles away from the lower school site. The third site is Kite Ridge House, which is a specialist local authority provision for students in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form with significant behavioural difficulties. Many of these students also have moderate or severe learning difficulties. This facility can take up to eight students. The school has a mixed population with almost half coming from families of Pakistani origin. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- Maplewood is a satisfactory school. It provides a very high standard of care linked to an excellent understanding of the principles of child development. This successfully engages its pupils in learning. The sixth form is satisfactory. The school's overall effectiveness is not better than satisfactory because of weaknesses in how it analyses pupils' achievements and some inconsistencies in the quality of both the curriculum and teaching.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall and there are some pupils who make good progress in specific areas, such as communication and interaction. Achievement in lessons is often good but, on a few occasions, the activities pupils are offered do not always build on the small steps of progress they have achieved previously.
- Teaching is often good and there are examples of excellent practice where teachers use specialist teaching techniques to enable pupils to achieve the improvement targets set for them. At times, though, teaching is less effective because lessons are not planned sufficiently well to meet the different ability levels of pupils. Additionally, the daily timetable gives insufficient emphasis to extending pupils' core skills, within the context of their special needs, in literacy and numeracy.
- Behaviour over time, at both the upper and lower school sites, is often good. Pupils respond well to each other and many are beginning to understand how they should behave both in and out of lessons. At Kite Ridge House, behaviour is satisfactory and appropriate behaviour management strategies ensure that pupils are safe and learning can take place.
- Leadership has developed good use of specialist teaching techniques. The effectiveness of performance management, however, is satisfactory rather than better because of inconsistencies in both teaching and the curriculum. Staff have a good understanding of many aspects of each pupil's progress. However, systems to monitor and evaluate how well individuals and groups of pupils are achieving when compared with national expectations are underdeveloped.

**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

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- By the end of the present academic year, find more effective ways to increase the focus on developing pupils' core skills in literacy and numeracy throughout each school day.
- Prior to the commencement of the next academic year, ensure that there are rigorous systems in place to analyse the progress of individuals and groups of pupils against national expectations for progress from their starting points.
- At the start of the next academic year, improve the quality of teaching to at least good by:
  - ensuring that the excellent practice that exists in some areas of the school is consistently applied throughout the school
  - ensuring that all teachers plan their activities based on pupils' different ability levels.

## **Main report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

The attainment of pupils, including in reading, is well below the national average which is understandable given the highly complex needs of pupils within the school. The achievement of pupils, including those in the sixth form and the very few children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is satisfactory. Parents and carers believe achievement to be better but inspection evidence does not support this view. The school has a wealth of evidence showing that individual pupils usually make good progress against the targets set for them at their annual reviews and at least satisfactory progress when compared with nationally expected rates of progress given their starting points. The school, however, acknowledges the need for better systems to track pupils' progress to enable it to be confident that all pupils and groups of pupils are achieving at similar rates.

In lessons, clear examples of pupils making good progress were observed. This was particularly so for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties in their recognition of objects and sounds. Pupils in a communication lesson, for example, were seen to be attracted by the noise of different instruments. They met the targets set for them to respond and react by following with their eyes a moving object, with one student making excellent progress by stretching out to touch a row of chiming bells. Pupils are beginning to make use of different systems of communication to make their needs known. For example, a number of pupils effectively use either picture exchange symbols or Makaton signing to inform staff of their needs. The progress of the few pupils with the ability to recognise sounds and words is often good. One pupil was able to read 'Brad's Birthday Cake' to the inspector. She did so with real enjoyment, identifying words she was not sure of by the initial letter sound.

**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

Progress is less evident where activities are not as finely tuned as they could be in addressing the different ability levels of pupils within each class and the progress they might be expected to make. For example, at both upper and lower sites, groups of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties were seen being massaged by staff whilst listening to music and stories. The link to the stories was unclear and planning was not sufficient to show pupils' outcomes from the sessions. Appropriately, time on the curriculum has to be set aside to meet the care needs of pupils and this results in lengthy morning and lunch breaks. At these times, insufficient emphasis is placed on providing pupils with learning activities that could develop their core skills, within the context of their complex needs, in literacy and numeracy.

**Quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and there are pockets of good and excellent practice. Parents and carers have a more positive view of teaching but inspection evidence does not support this. Teachers' use of highly specialised techniques successfully engages pupils in learning. One such technique, known as 'intensive interaction', is often used effectively by teachers to gain the attention of individual pupils to elicit responses and reactions to the movements of another person. Teachers' enthusiasm was seen to good effect in a number of lessons. For example, in an upper school music lesson, the teachers enthusiastically encouraged pupils to respond to touching different materials and objects and engage with staff in clapping and singing in different rhythms. In this lesson, as in many others, teaching assistants were fully involved because they are very clear about the learning objectives of the activities and are familiar with the improvement targets for each pupil.

Teachers use praise well to build up the confidence of pupils and this is very effective in encouraging pupils to try new activities. This was clearly seen in the hydro pool where pupils, with encouragement from staff, moved around the water in different ways; one student delighted the staff by progressing to lying on his back with the support of an adult and kicking out excitedly with his feet. Staff are very imaginative in gaining the attention of pupils. In the assembly, staff passed a large coloured cloth over pupils' heads to elicit a response and then encouraged them to react through the excellent use of music, songs, signing and pictures displayed on a large screen. The content of this session, as in many others, demonstrated the good focus the school puts on promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

On the few occasions when teaching is less effective, it is usually because there is insufficient focus in the curriculum planning on the progress pupils are expected to make when they undertake activities. For example, pupils on both sites have weekly opportunities throughout the year to visit local supermarkets and the library. Planning for these activities fails to show how they are used to develop pupils' skills, particularly in aspects of literacy and numeracy. At Kite Ridge House, the curriculum covers a good range of activities, which are delivered by key workers. Although these activities successfully engage pupils, it is not clear how the planning for them

**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

is link to the assessed levels of pupils' ability and how they will enable pupils to progress.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Although the behaviour and safety of pupils is good at both the upper and lower school, it is satisfactory at the Kite Ridge site. Parents and carers of pupils at the upper and lower sites recognise that behaviour and safety here are good and fully appreciate the high quality of care provided by staff to support this. Over time, these pupils show improved levels of cooperation with each other. This was seen in the playground, where some pupils happily shared the use of tricycles and other equipment, whilst others, well supervised by staff, enjoyed the opportunity to be outside in the fresh air. Pupils show by their actions in and out of the classroom that many are developing an increased awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, at lunchtime, ambulant pupils moved around the dining room helping to clear away their plates and avoiding knocking into pupils confined to wheelchairs.

There are no concerns with regard to any form of bullying within the school. There are a few recorded instances of inappropriate behaviour in both the upper and lower school. When these do occur, clear details are recorded and analysed. When it is felt necessary, individual behaviour management plans are created. Parents and carers are fully involved in this process and staff follow the guidelines of the plans very carefully. At Kite Ridge House, there are many more incidents of inappropriate behaviour but good systems are in place to support each pupil and very high levels of supervision ensure that pupils are safe. Liaison with specialists, such as an educational psychologist, help to increase the insight staff have on individual pupils' behaviour.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher and the governing body have a concerted approach to ensuring that the school continues to provide the very best it can for its pupils. Performance management is given a high priority and some progress has been made in improving provision, although weaknesses still remain in teaching and the curriculum. There has been, nevertheless, a trend of sustained improvements. The new hydro pool and improvements to sensory resources are clear examples of beneficial recent developments, which have had a clear impact on pupils' progress and well-being. Some improvements have also been made to the specialist support pupils receive as a result of a comprehensive professional training programme. These improvements and the detailed school development plan, based on a clear evaluation of current provision, show that despite the weaknesses identified, the school has the capacity to improve further.

The school's ethos recognises the uniqueness of each pupil and the focus on celebrating their achievements shows the prominence given to their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Safeguarding is given a very high priority and

**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

arrangements are both made and monitored very carefully by the governing body. Much has been done to improve the curriculum since the previous inspection and it matches the needs of pupils and provides an adequate preparation for the next stage of their lives. There is, however, insufficient emphasis placed on the daily development of the core skills of literacy and numeracy. The strong emphasis placed on setting individual improvement targets and the high quality of care for the complex individual needs of each pupil confirms that the school is committed to equality of opportunity for each student and no form of discrimination is tolerated.

The school has very good relationships with parents and carers who, in turn, have a very positive view of the school's effectiveness. This in part reflects the very high standards of care in the school. 'Staff are caring and dedicated to helping the children as much as possible in very difficult circumstances' is typical of the parental comments made. Inspection evidence does not challenge this positive view of care but does highlight that aspects of the curriculum, teaching and tracking the progress of pupils are in need of improvement.



## 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



1 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Maplewood School, High Wycombe HP13 5HB**

Thank you for your warm welcome when Mrs Blount and I came to visit recently. I recognise that reading this will be very hard for many of you but I know the school staff and your parents will help. We really enjoyed meeting so many of you and looking at your work.

We consider your school to be satisfactory. Both your achievements and the quality of teaching are satisfactory. Many of you at the upper and lower school behave well and we saw how well you support each other at lunchtime. At the Kite Ridge House, behaviour is not as good. We can see that many of you now have the confidence to do far more in the community.

In many ways, the centre has improved since its last inspection. Much of this is due to the good leadership and management of the headteacher and support of the governing body. We especially like your new swimming pool. To be even better, we have recommended three areas of improvement to the school:

- Make sure all the teaching enables you all to make even more progress.
- Increase the support you have for reading and number
- For the school to have better records of how well you are all doing.

Once again, thank you for making our job so enjoyable when we came to visit.

Yours sincerely

Charles Hackett

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**