

Maidenhill School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115775
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	357818
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Robert Pyner HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	545
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Hauser
Headteacher	Gary Watson
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 27 lessons and observed the same number of teachers. They held meetings with senior and middle leaders, the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, staff, the National Challenge Adviser and groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at progress tracking and performance data, the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, students' work and numerous policies, guidelines, plans and reviews. The questionnaire responses from 233 parents and carers, 133 students and 35 staff were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well different groups, particularly boys and middle-ability students, achieve and make progress in their learning across the curriculum, especially in mathematics and science.
- The extent to which teaching and learning offer support and challenge for all groups of students in order to raise attainment and accelerate progress.
- The appropriateness of the curriculum, including specialist subjects, to provide courses which maximise achievement for all ability groups.
- The effectiveness of the school's provision to promote equal opportunity and tackle discrimination.
- The accuracy and demonstrable impact of self-evaluation by leaders and managers at all levels in driving up outcomes for all groups of learners and the extent to which this demonstrates capacity for sustained improvement.

Information about the school

Maidenhill School is smaller than the average comprehensive and serves Stonehouse, on the fringes of Stroud. Overall, student numbers are beginning to stabilise following a decline and this year the school has admitted students, mostly in Year 10, from a local school which is closing; more admissions are planned under this programme. The school has specialist status in the performing arts. Most students are from a White British heritage and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The percentage with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average; students' needs include moderate learning and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national figure.

A new sports hall and performing arts pavilion were completed in January 2011. The school has achieved the Healthy School and International School awards.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Maidenhill School provides a satisfactory and improving quality of education. It provides a good standard of care, guidance and support, which promotes students' personal development effectively. Students enjoy coming to the school and this is reflected in the improved attendance rates, which are above average. They behave well in and around the school and say they feel safe. Parents and carers appreciate the support their children receive and, in the large response to the inspection questionnaire, noted the improvements which have taken place since the last inspection. In a response typical of many, one parent noted 'This school is led by a strong and effective management team who instil a positive ethos in the staff and students. Each term/year sees further improvements in attitudes, standards of behaviour, results and achievements.' Parents and carers of the group of students who transferred from a local school which is closing appreciated how well their children had been integrated into Maidenhill.

The drive and ambition of the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and governing body continue to have a positive impact on raising attainment and accelerating progress. Understandably, they have focused on the older students, although there are now plans to develop the most successful strategies in Key Stage 3. Overall, although attainment is low, it is improving strongly. All groups of students make satisfactory progress and this is improving securely and quickly. An example of this is the significant improvement in attainment in English. However, the pace of improvement is less marked in mathematics and science. Moreover, the school does not use targets in line with those for the highest performing comparable schools systematically.

Teaching is satisfactory and improving. In the majority of lessons, the pace is brisk and students are encouraged to reflect on their learning by discussing their work in pairs or in small groups. There are fewer opportunities for them to apply their knowledge, understanding and skills in specific learning activities. Additionally, although teachers use a wide range of assessment data, it is not used sharply enough to plan activities to challenge specific ability groups. Marking is inconsistent within and across subjects.

The school uses its specialist status effectively to extend the curriculum, enhance students' learning about other cultures and build effective links with the community. The curriculum is developing well to meet the needs of students, particularly with the increasing range of vocational options available. Learning is reinforced by the good range of extra-curricular clubs and sporting activities.

Senior leaders evaluate the work of the school well. They have a highly accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement based on the rigorous analysis of students' progress in curriculum subjects and the monitoring of teaching and learning. The improvements in attainment, teaching and learning and the shared

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commitment of staff and governing body demonstrate a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Up to 40% of the 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?

- Raise attainment and accelerate rates of progress in all subjects, but particularly in mathematics and science, by:
 - using the successful strategies implemented in Key Stage 4 to focus more sharply on improving the progress made by students in Key Stage 3
 - using achievement targets for students that are consistently in line with those for the highest performing comparable schools
 - using assessment information in a more focused way to ensure that all lessons display effective pace and challenge for individuals and groups
 - planning lessons that include learning activities which require students to apply their knowledge, understanding and skills
 - ensuring that marking is used consistently across and within subjects so that students know how well they are doing and what they need to improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grade C or above, including English and mathematics, was significantly below average in 2010; however, this represents a strongly improving profile since the last inspection. Furthermore, the latest assessment tracking for this year shows a further significant improvement for this measure. This improvement is particularly impressive in English, with predictions for the proportion of GCSE passes at grades A* to C this year being more than double that achieved in 2008. Other subjects that perform well include English literature, geography and drama. Improvement in single science and mathematics is slower, although the school's predictions and inspection evidence suggest a significant improvement in the latter subject this year.

School data and observation of lessons confirm that learning and progress for all groups of students are satisfactory in relation to their starting points and that this is improving securely and quickly. For example, students in Years 10 and 11 have benefited from an effective system of mentoring and academic support and, as a result, boys and girls from all ability groups show improved attainment. However, support and intervention systems are not as well developed in Key Stage 3 and consequently the progress made by students in Years 7 to 9 is less marked. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress due to the individual or small group support they receive.

Most students are keen to do well, respond thoughtfully to adults and other students in lessons and demonstrate good attitudes to learning and behaviour. Discussions with students show that generally they enjoy their lessons and appreciate the good relationships found within the school. Attendance is above average. Older students recognise the improvements in many aspects of the school over the last few years. As one

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said, 'Teachers care about us and there have been many changes for the better.' The school is particularly effective in promoting students' moral, social and cultural development, particularly through the performing arts, and spiritual reflection is enhanced by well-chosen assembly themes. Elements of workplace place skills are developed well, such as team work and information and communication technology, but weaker literacy and numeracy skills mean that this aspect is satisfactory overall rather than good.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The school provides a purposeful climate for learning. Lessons, generally, meet students' needs and planning is good, although sometimes overly optimistic in what can be covered in a lesson. In effective lessons, the pace is brisk and students are engaged through a range of practical activities, paired and group work, which maintains their interest. There are examples of good questioning, which promotes effective learning. However, students' practical application of learning is not seen consistently across the school and, where this is not a feature of the lesson, progress slows. There is effective use of technology by teachers and students report that they have good access to computers within lessons. Observations showed effective teaching linked to assessment at a whole-class level, but there was less evidence of learning activities being focused sharply on the needs of specific ability groups. Where this is the case, the lack of focused challenge for groups and individuals leads to lower achievement. Although most students are aware of their

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attainment levels and learning targets, there is inconsistent implementation of the school's marking policy. This means that students are not given information systematically about what they need to do to improve their work.

A developing curriculum reflects the concerted efforts by the school to improve this aspect of its provision. There is now an appropriate balance of academic subjects and thoughtfully structured personal, social and health education, citizenship and vocational programmes. This provision reflects the effective and developing partnerships with schools, the local further education college and businesses in the community. The introduction of specific vocational courses for Year 9 students, for example in design technology, has increased motivation and attendance by students, as well as encouraging independent learning. The school provides a broad range of extra-curricular clubs and activities which enrich the curriculum and are attended by a high proportion of students. The performing arts specialism enhances the range of opportunities available across the school significantly and provides effective links with the community. Students appreciate the extra resources, newly built facilities and opportunities available to them.

Students report that they feel safe and almost all parents and carers noted in the inspection questionnaire that the school has effective procedures for promoting safety. Incidents of bullying or misbehaviour are dealt with quickly by staff, supported by students trained as anti-bullying mentors, and the school has gained an award from the local authority for this work. Transition arrangements for when the students join or leave the school are thorough. The school has worked well to integrate a significant number of students from a local school which is closing and this is appreciated by the parents and carers involved. One said 'We did have a sticky start changing schools. As parents we have now been into the school on a few occasions and our daughter is now settled and getting the help she needs. We are very pleased with the outcome.' Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. Thorough procedures to promote attendance, including effective work by heads of year, have been successful in establishing a trend of significant improvement over the last few years.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, senior leaders and most middle managers share a clear commitment to raising attainment and accelerating progress, which is developing the school quickly. As the professional leader of the school, the headteacher has an open, determined approach and students, staff and parents and carers speak positively about the support he provides. The regular and focused use of systems to monitor students' progress in order to identify

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and target underachievement has raised expectations and has had a positive impact on teaching and learning across the school. In this work, the school has used the support of partners, including the National Challenge Adviser, effectively. Now, senior leaders are aware that the time is right to raise expectations further in order to accelerate improvement in achievement even more.

The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination satisfactorily. It provides an inclusive environment in which students with different abilities and needs are encouraged to take full advantage of the opportunities available. There are good links with parents and carers, seeking their views through surveys and involving them in discussions about their children's progress. The responses to the parental questionnaire distributed as part of the inspection demonstrated how much the community appreciates the improvements at the school. The school has suitable plans to promote community cohesion based on its audit of provision. There are good links with the local community and an international link has been set up with a school in Kenya. Links with the various religious and ethnic groups represented in the wider United Kingdom are less developed.

Procedures for safeguarding students are good. Staff receive appropriate training in child protection and there are thorough recruitment procedures to check the suitability of staff to work with children. The governing body has developed its role well since the last inspection, with a strong focus on raising achievement. It holds the school to account well, with one of the key drivers for this process being the Raising Achievement Plan Management Group. The governing body is well led and structured, with a clear vision for the further development of provision as well as plans to deal with the current budget issues.

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	3
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Views of parents and carers

A much higher-than-average proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires during the inspection, representing 43% of the students on roll. Most parents and carers are happy with their children's experience at the school. Responses show that they feel strongly that their children enjoy school, are safe and cared for, that they are well informed about their child's progress and that teaching is good. Most parents and carers feel also that their children are making enough progress, they are well prepared for their future in further education or employment and that the leaders and managers of the school are effective. A few believe that the school is less effective in dealing with unacceptable behaviour and taking account of their suggestions and concerns. During the inspection, the inspectors found that the school had effective procedures for managing behaviour and that there were good systems for consultation with parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Maidenhill 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 233 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 545 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	27	145	66	14	6	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	77	35	138	63	4	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	96	44	117	53	6	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	79	36	124	56	14	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	59	27	141	64	9	4	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	25	143	65	17	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	21	149	68	18	8	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)	66	30	144	64	6	3	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	58	26	140	64	14	6	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	58	26	135	61	24	11	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	24	130	59	23	10	3	1
The school is led and managed effectively	82	37	124	56	5	2	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	86	39	117	53	10	5	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.

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.



13 May 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Maidenhill School, Stonehouse GL10 2HA

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we inspected your school recently. Special thanks go to the student guides who helped us find our way around and to those of you who completed the questionnaire; we found this very useful. We enjoyed talking to you and found what you had to say very informative and relevant. This letter is to tell you about our findings.

Maidenhill School provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education. We were impressed by your good behaviour and the quality of your relationships with adults and other students. Attainment at the end of Year 11 is low, but improving strongly; the progress that you make in your learning is satisfactory and improving quickly, but needs to be greater, particularly in mathematics and science. The opportunities you have through the specialist subject of the performing arts are good. You are cared for and supported well and you told inspectors that you appreciate this. Your parents and carers, also, like the way you are cared for and supported. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some that is good and better. Your teachers provide you with a satisfactory curriculum that increasingly meets your interests and needs.

The headteacher, senior staff and governing body provide effective leadership. They recognise that there are always areas for improvement, and we have asked them to raise attainment and accelerate rates of progress in all subjects, but particularly in mathematics and science.

You too have an important part to play by continuing to work hard, making the most of the wide range of opportunities you have at school and attending regularly. We are sure that you will and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Robert Pyner

Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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