

Maplewell Hall School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120348
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	379996
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2012
Lead inspector	David Muir HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	14
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Stanton
Headteacher	Susan Tindal
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2008
School address	Maplewell Road Woodhouse Eaves Loughborough LE12 8QY
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Boarding/Residential provision	
Social care unique reference number	SC001836
Social care inspector	Katarina Djordjevic

Age group	11-19
Inspection date(s)	21–22 March 2012
Inspection number	379996



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Introduction

Inspection team

David Muir

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alan Jones

Additional inspector

Katarina Djordjevic

Social care inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice and was undertaken jointly between social care and education inspectors. The inspectors observed nine lessons and parts of lessons taught by nine teachers including members of the senior leadership team. Meetings were held with a group of students and members of the school staff and residence staff. The inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school's development planning, examples of students' work, and health and safety documentation. The inspectors also took into account the views of 59 parents and carers who returned questionnaires.

Information about the school

The school provides education and care for students with moderate learning difficulties and some with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Some also have other diagnoses such as social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are significantly more boys than girls in the school. Students in the sixth form all have ASD and are partly educated in local mainstream colleges.

The school has a residential provision but currently no students have this written into their statement of special educational needs. However, the school uses this provision to provide activities in the evening for up to 20 students at a time for two nights a week for periods of approximately six weeks. All residential accommodation is in the main building of the school and is organised on two floors with boys' accommodation on the first floor and girls' accommodation on the second floor. The residential area has a TV lounge and, in addition, there is a pool table, a computer room and an arts and crafts area.

The school is a specialist sports' college and currently holds several awards including Healthy Schools status, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Investors in People.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Maplewell Hall is a good school. It has several areas of outstanding practice, including the quality of teaching, achievement, and outcomes within the boarding provision. It is not outstanding overall, as several areas of monitoring by leaders are not as robust and effective as they could be and therefore some inconsistencies occur. The sixth form is good overall. The boarding provision is good overall.
- When students join the school, they are working at a lower level than expected for their age, due to their special educational needs. However during their time in the school, including the sixth form, they make outstanding progress in their learning. The longer that students are in the school, the more rapid and sustained their progress becomes.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. A large majority of lessons seen during the inspection confirmed this. Teachers know the needs of the students well and meet their needs very effectively in lessons. In the best lessons seen, there were high levels of pace and challenge and students were expected to evaluate their learning and help plan for their next steps. Learning support assistants provide strong support as they know the students well.
- Behaviour is good overall. In nearly all lessons seen behaviour was outstanding due to students' eagerness to learn and contribute in a positive way to class discussions. Students respond well to individual behaviour management strategies, although these are not always written as formal behaviour plans, which can limit their effectiveness. Behaviour around the school is good but some disruption was seen in break times. However these incidents were effectively managed and de-escalated by staff.
- Leadership and management are good in the school and satisfactory in the residence. The promotion of high standards of teaching and outstanding achievement is a significant factor in this. The strong curriculum also contributes well. Although there are some weaknesses in recruitment procedures and environmental risk assessments, these have not compromised the safety of students. A large majority of parents who responded to the

questionnaire were pleased with the provision made for their children.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- The school must ensure that it meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools which have not been met (6.2, 13.1 and 14.1).
- Improve the residential bedrooms to make the decor more child friendly.
- Ensure all health information including emergency plans is kept up to date and reviewed regularly.
- Ensure that the monitoring of recruitment checks are carried out regularly to ensure that all required areas are covered.
- Ensure that feedback provided to students is consistently followed-up to allow its impact on outcomes to be measured.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

During their time in Maplewell Hall, the progress made by students increases. At Key Stage 3, students make outstanding progress, which improves still further when they are in Key Stage 4. By the time they reach the end of Year 11, they have made outstanding gains in their learning in relation to where they started from. This trend continues in the post-16 provision. As barriers to students' learning are reduced, progress increases. All groups of students make strong progress and there is no evidence of any groups of students achieving less well than others. Although attainment at the end of Year 11 is below national expectations, students are still able to achieve a range of appropriate and meaningful qualifications including Entry Level Certificates and GCSEs.

Students made outstanding progress in nearly all lessons seen during the inspection, including in the sixth form. This is typical of the learning that occurs in lessons over time. This is because students are given a range of activities which engage and enthuse them, meeting their needs and interests extremely well. In an outstanding English lesson seen, the teacher used multi-sensory prompts to encourage the students to create a scary scenario for a story. They enjoyed this and were all able to participate and enjoy the activity to an impressive level. There is a clear and evident focus on improving literacy, numeracy, communication and personal skills across the curriculum. This emphasis was seen in the lessons observed and was applied consistently in all areas of the curriculum. The school targets students who would benefit from extra support and interventions to increase their progress. Leaders monitor the effectiveness of them closely over time. When the interventions are reviewed, leaders decide how effective they have been and amend them, cancel them or continue them as appropriate. Students are given regular opportunities in lessons to evaluate their own learning. Skilful questioning by teachers and support staff helps them to maximise learning and progress by amending lessons according to the learning taking place. Nearly all parents and carers who responded to the survey rightly agreed or strongly agreed that their child makes good progress.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is outstanding. The quality of teaching is the same in all key stages, including the sixth form. The slightly lower rate of progress evident in Key Stage 3 is related to the students settling into the school, re-engaging and starting to enjoy learning again, rather than due to a lower quality of teaching. During the inspection, all of the teaching observed was at least good with the large majority of it being outstanding. Although the school's own self-evaluation was more conservative, leaders have identified where there are strengths and where further development is needed. Teachers are supported very well to improve the quality of their teaching and this has helped the overall quality of teaching to improve from good at the previous inspection.

In all the teaching seen, students were actively involved in their learning and clearly enjoyed it having sufficient time to reflect on their learning. This attitude was confirmed in conversations with students about their learning. Teachers, and other staff, are skilful at overcoming students' barriers to learning and enabling them to make rapid progress. There is also a strong promotion of literacy, numeracy, communication and personal skills across the breadth of the planned curriculum. Learning support assistants are well deployed by teachers and in the lessons seen, were skilful at knowing when to support and when to allow students to work independently. An impressive example of a lesson where all students were fully involved was a religious education lesson where the teacher skilfully promoted a discussion around the ethics of human cloning. This led to some very interesting contributions, related to the moral and spiritual dilemmas in this area. It was a good example of how moral issues are raised and confronted extremely well in the school and how the curriculum supports students' spiritual and moral development.

Feedback to students in books provides a range of information, so that students know how well they have done and how they can improve further. However, the quality of the follow-up is not consistent, so it is sometimes not clear how students have responded to the feedback or how it has impacted on their future work. Work in books is always marked, well presented and shows progress in line with the outstanding judgment for achievement. Nearly all parents and carers who responded to the survey justifiably agreed or strongly agreed that their child is taught well. In addition to the very positive returns by students in the questionnaires, the discussions with students showed that they enjoy their learning and agree that they are making very rapid progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour and safety of students in the school and the residential provision is good. In the large majority of lessons seen, behaviour for learning was outstanding. This is because students were fully engaged in their learning and clearly enjoying participating in discussions and activities well suited to their interests.

At times, other than in lessons, there is evidence of challenging behaviour by some younger students, who are more recent entrants to the school and have not yet fully settled into the ethos of expectations of behaviour. However, these incidents are

handled well by staff and quickly defused. Despite these incidents, inspectors also witnessed one student's pride in his positive report card as he clearly gained a basic understanding of the expectations, seeking praise for his improved behaviour. Restraint is sometimes used by members of staff as one facet of behaviour management. The school is currently reviewing how well this technique is used to promote improved behaviour and safety. There were many indicators that students are expected to increasingly manage their own behaviour and develop their awareness of right and wrong. Data over time shows a significantly lower number of incidents in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3, due to students becoming more successful in managing their behaviour independently.

Students have a strong voice and say that, on occasions, bullying happens but that staff are effective in resolving any incidents. On further questioning the pupils were referring to isolated incidents and disagreements. There was no evidence of other types of bullying. Students agreed that they feel safe in the school and parents agree strongly with this. Students have a very clear idea of what good behaviour is and are keen to promote it throughout the school. They challenge peers who are not adhering to these standards. There is a strong awareness among students of right and wrong as a result of the input they receive during their time in the school. There is a clear programme of interventions and support for students to improve their behaviour. Interventions are monitored closely for their effectiveness and impact on outcomes. As a result of this monitoring, they are often used for short periods of time, until students have resettled in school or are back on track with regard to the progress they are making.

Leadership and management

The stronger elements of leadership have led to a sustained and rapid improvement in the quality of teaching in the school and mean there is effective capacity for further improvement. This has had a correspondingly strong impact on outcomes in terms of students' achievements in school and outcomes in the residence, which are both outstanding. There are high expectations of students in all aspects of the school's work. A small minority of staff questionnaires returned suggested that morale was sometimes low due to inconsistent behaviour management. Inspectors found no further evidence during the inspection to support this. However, some issues were found regarding the consistency of checks for staff around recruitment. Although there are appropriate procedures in place, some errors have occurred in how the checks have been followed-up and recorded. The identified errors have been rectified and there was no evident risk to students as a result.

The school has good links with the local community and colleges where the sixth form students are educated. Some of the school's facilities, such as the hairdressing salon, are used by other schools. The impressive museum in the school is also used by other schools and the community. This resource has an excellent range of artefacts related to different periods in history. The current display of uniforms, money, passes, ration books, etc originate from the two world wars and give students extremely valuable hands-on experiences and effectively support the strong curriculum. Many artefacts have been donated through the community. The curriculum, overall, is tailored to individual needs, especially in the sixth form, where the wide range of colleges used provides for a diverse range of option, qualifications

and pathways. Leaders have robust systems in place to monitor the quality of these courses so that these students are able to make the same progress as other students in the school.

The governing body is involved in the life of school making visits and is provided with regular reports so that it can monitor the school's work. Leaders promote equality and a strong community within the school and discrimination is not tolerated. Groups of students are monitored closely so that any signs of underachievement could be identified although there is no evidence of underachievement within any groups or cohorts. Students are happy in the school and this is seen through their above average attendance. Their increasing sense of self-worth and self-esteem reflect the successful promotion of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in all aspects of the school's work. There are celebrations of a range of religions and close links with the local church, and the school is currently linked with a 'twin' school in Germany. The school provides additional music classes, daily assemblies and reflection time. The school's impressive use of its grounds and surrounding areas helps promote outdoor education extremely well. This allows for opportunities for students to work together and collaborate with others.

Residential provision

The overall effectiveness of the residential provision is good. Staff are very committed to enabling students to experience a range of leisure and learning opportunities. Students make progress in developing their independence, social and emotional skills while at the same time having fun. Students enjoy staying in the residence and are very happy with the care they receive. Parents support this.

Outcomes for residential students are outstanding. Students access a range of activities and opportunities that they may not be able to access elsewhere. Excellent relationships exist between residential students and staff, and students are able to raise any concerns they may have. This helps to protect students from the risk of harm and abuse including bullying.

The quality of residential provision and care is good. Health information is kept for students but is not always updated regularly. However, there is very good liaison with parents, who are primarily responsible for the health care of students, and health professionals. The management of medication is good and staff receive training for specific medical needs. This helps to protect students from the risk of harm. Healthy eating is actively promoted and the provision of meals is excellent. The catering staff are extremely flexible and committed to ensuring individual students' likes, dislikes and dietary needs are met. The accommodation is decorated to a satisfactory standard but the bedrooms are bare and the décor is not child friendly.

The safety of students is good. Physical interventions and sanctions are rarely used. Students feel safe in the residence. Staff receive training in child protection and are aware of their responsibilities in reporting any concerns in this area. The majority of health and safety procedures and practices help to protect students from the risk of harm and injury. Although there are some environmental risk assessments for the

grounds these are not comprehensive. Inspectors noticed an area where rubbish is burned, where the remains were easily accessible to students. This presented a number of hazards to students. Recruitment practices are not robust enough as there are some inconsistencies in their implementation.

The leadership and management of the residential provision are satisfactory. The staff team are committed to supporting students to achieve their potential in preparation for adulthood. There are a range of detailed policies and procedures. However, the whole school’s management monitoring systems have not always ensured that procedures are implemented fully, which includes recruitment practices and the monitoring of health and safety issues.

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.

National minimum standards

- The school has regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State 'Health and Safety: Department for Education Advice on Legal Duties and Powers for Local Authorities, Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies' (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards') (6.2)
- Schools operate safe recruitment procedures and vet staff in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards') (14.1).
- There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of residential and care provision in the school, and effective links are made between academic and residential staff. The school's governing body or proprietor has a system to monitor care and welfare provision in the school (13.1)

These are the grades for the residential provision

Overall effectiveness of the residential experience	2
Outcomes for residential pupils	1
Quality of residential provision and care	2
Residential pupils’ safety	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	3

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).

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.

23 March 2012

Dear Students



Inspection of Maplewell Hall School, Loughborough, LE12 8QY

On behalf of the three inspectors who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you very much for giving us such an enjoyable and memorable experience and sharing your experiences in your school. I would also like to express my thanks for your welcome to your school.

We found your school to be good overall. The quality of teaching is outstanding. This supports the outstanding achievement that you make. Leadership and management are good in the school and satisfactory in the residence. The headteacher and leadership team are committed to ensuring that you receive the best possible education that you can. It was clear during the inspection, and from your comments, how much you appreciate them and their hard work and that you enjoy school.

Your attitudes to learning are outstanding as is your behaviour in lessons. However your behaviour outside lessons is not quite as good and staff sometimes need to remind you how to behave at these times. The improvements that you make in your personal development during your time in the school are strong. Adults in the school know how to support you and make your time there as successful as possible. This means that by the time you leave school, you are increasingly well prepared and have started to develop a level of confidence and independence with which to go forward.

You should be proud of yourselves and the contribution that you make to the school and your part in helping it to continue to improve. I particularly enjoyed meeting the group of students who came to talk to me and I could see from your comments that you really appreciate how much the school helps you and teaches you. I have asked the headteacher to improve some things as the result of the inspection. These areas are around the paperwork which needs to be done when new members of staff are appointed. This will help to ensure that you are safe in the school. I have also asked them to ensure that feedback is checked afterwards to help you improve your work.

Once again, sincere thanks to you all for the time you spent with us during the visit and I would like to wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Muir
Her Majesty's Inspector

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