

Maple House School

23-27 Parchmore Road, Thornton Heath, CR7 8LY

Inspection dates 6–7 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Pupils' achievement is good and pupils make good gains in their learning over time.
- Teaching is good and mostly meets the specific needs and abilities of all pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour and their personal development are outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy school, are safe and are well looked after.
- The school's leaders and all staff are strongly committed to making Maple House a happy and successful school. They have significantly improved teaching and accelerated pupils' progress since the last inspection.

It is not yet outstanding because

- On a very few occasions, a small number of pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- Although the school monitors pupils' progress well, it could be improved to help pupils achieve even better.
- Although the content of the school's written policy documents are adequate and information is correct, the documents are not clearly written and are not presented attractively so parents, carers and others can read them easily.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards)(England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards)(England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The school was given half a day's notice of the inspection. The inspector observed nine lessons across all year groups and nine teachers were seen teaching.
- Pupils were observed arriving and leaving the school and at break time. The inspector listened to pupils read. A sample of pupils' work was evaluated.
- Interviews were held with the proprietor, members of staff and a group of pupils from each year group. A range of school policies was reviewed.
- There were no Parent View responses, but 24 responses from parents and carers to a school survey and four Ofsted questionnaire responses from staff were analysed.

Inspection team

Paul Armitage, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Maple House is a small Montessori school in Thornton Heath, Surrey. Its aim is 'to help pupils develop their knowledge and skills to reach their full potential in anticipation of their transfer to senior school'.
- The school opened in February 1999. It has 56 boys and girls on roll, aged three to 11 years. Twelve pupils attend part time. There are no disabled pupils and no pupils with special educational needs. None of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Most pupils are of Black African or Black Caribbean heritage, with the remainder coming from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Five pupils speak English as an additional language.
- There are extra activities in the evening until 5.30pm. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, this is mainly a continuation of day activities. In the rest of the school, the focus is on supporting homework. There is also a breakfast club beginning at 7.45am. No other alternative provision is used by the school.
- The school's last full inspection by Ofsted was in September 2009 when the school failed a number of regulations related to the quality of the curriculum, teaching, the Early Years Foundation Stage, and access for those pupils with a disability. This was followed by a progress monitoring inspection in April 2010, which judged that the school had addressed all but one of the regulations. The inspection found that there was insufficient outdoor play space for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the teaching always addresses the needs and abilities of all pupils in a class.
- Building on its current good self-evaluation practice, produce a regular overview of the progress of all pupils so school leaders can identify strengths and weaknesses and respond appropriately.
- Improve the clarity and presentation of school policies so that parents, carers and others can more easily read and understand them.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Pupils' achievement is good because teaching is effective and the curriculum meets pupils' needs well. Overall, pupils' progress, given their different starting points, compares favourably with achievement nationally. This is a considerable improvement from the time of the last full inspection. However, achievement is not yet outstanding because pupils' progress is not exceptional. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage join the school with knowledge, skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age. However, they are progressing well and almost all Reception children are currently in line to meet at least the expected levels of development by the end of the Reception Year. Their progress in the prime areas of communication and language, mathematical understanding, physical development, and personal, social and emotional development is good. This good progress continues in Key Stages 1 and 2. The latest national test results indicate that almost all pupils achieved the expected National Curriculum Level 4 or better. A substantial minority of the most able achieved the higher National Curriculum Level 5. Achievement in English was slightly better than in mathematics. This is also a considerable improvement on the results achieved at the time of the last full inspection. Analysis of pupils' work confirms that their progress is good across all subjects, including literacy and numeracy. Pupils' artwork around the school is particularly impressive. The school prepares Key Stage 2 pupils for the entrance examinations of a number of independent senior schools. Its success rate in gaining places is high. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are progressing well because of the high level of support that they receive. There is no difference in achievement between pupils from different ethnic groups.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are outstanding as a result of the school's outstanding provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In class and elsewhere in school, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. This results from teachers conveying consistently high expectations about behaviour and pupils' willingness to cooperate. Older pupils say that bullying is rare because they have a good understanding of what it is and how to avoid it. In consequence, most of the time pupils get on exceedingly well with each other. The school has recently had an anti-bullying week. Pupils' attitudes to learning and to life in general are extremely positive. In class, teachers are good at making sure that everyone has a chance to answer questions or take part in an activity such as reading to the class. There are excellent opportunities to take part in sport, drama and becoming a monitor and member of the school council. Pupils are very keen to take up these opportunities which develop self-confidence. Attendance is very good and pupils arrive on time. Pupils' social skills are very well developed. Pupils are polite and respect for others is a strong feature of the school. Social skills are further developed by pupils' participation in the wider community, for example by performing at the local community centre to raise money for Help the Aged. Such activities also raise confidence. Pupils know about dangerous situations and how to protect themselves. The school has successfully worked with older pupils on computer safety. A community police officer's visit reinforced the school's messages. In this way, pupils are also developing good knowledge of public institutions. Pupils are open minded and are encouraged to listen and think before acting. They are as comfortable studying Florence Nightingale and Winston Churchill as they are exploring the successes of Black opinion makers such as Rosa Parks and Nelson Mandela. They understand the sacrifices made by people and the implications of these; for example by listening to the story of a Second World War army veteran who visited the school. They are also developing an excellent understanding of other cultures through the study of different countries and events such as World Book Day.

Quality of teaching**Good**

Teaching is good. This is a significant improvement since the last full inspection. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, influenced by Montessori principles, there is a good balance between formal teaching and child-initiated choices. This balance is helped by the very good accommodation that encourages children's movement inside and outside to promote learning and also by the good resources. Teachers have good, sensitive relationships with the children. They are very aware of the different personalities and the help that each child needs. Assessment of children's development is frequent, detailed and successfully informs teaching. In Key Stages 1 and 2, teaching is good. Almost always, teachers plan effective lessons that challenge pupils well and are responsive to pupils' needs. Occasionally, this responsiveness is not quite sharp enough and the needs of a few pupils are not met, particularly higher attainers. This is the main reason why pupils' academic achievement is not outstanding. In some parts of lessons teachers ask good, open-ended questions which suitably test and challenge pupils' thinking. There are also plenty of opportunities for pupils to work independently, including opportunities for research. Some of the best independent work is where subjects are linked together, such as the mix of English and art in Year 5 and 6's visual presentation of 'revolting recipes'. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's pictures of flowers and aeroplanes successfully link literacy, understanding of the world and personal development together and this makes learning more coherent and meaningful. There is excellent cooperation between teachers. This aids continuity in both the curriculum and in teaching. Homework is set regularly. Teaching of pupils who speak English as an additional language involves one-to-one tuition with withdrawal from classes. Sometimes these pupils are asked to work together and sometimes they work with pupils whose primary language is English. These strategies work well. There is frequent assessment of pupils' work. Clear targets are set and, when asked, pupils readily explain their targets and how they are addressing them. Pupils have portfolios containing examples of their work including test results. In consequence, when asked, teachers can make detailed comments on the strengths and weaknesses of each child. However, as yet, the school does not produce a regular overview of all pupils' progress so that it can determine whole-school trends and patterns and fine-tune, even more precisely, its current good response.

Quality of curriculum**Good**

The curriculum is good and enables effective learning. There are clear curriculum policies and good schemes of work. The curriculum covers all of the required areas of learning and it is well suited to the needs of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language. For this group of pupils, the school modifies the curriculum by using carefully selected material, some of which is also sent home for parents and carers to share. Selected phonics (the sounds that letters make) material is one example. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum successfully blends the statutory curriculum with Montessori principles about the nature and use of the environment and resources. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the English curriculum includes phonics; spelling; writing; reading; home reading; shared, guided and independent writing; and handwriting and presentation. There are separate mathematics and calculations policies. The curriculum also includes a wide range of subjects. Personal, social, and health education is effectively taught in themes one afternoon a week. The use of computers is woven successfully through the curriculum as a whole. The time allocations for each subject are good. The school also has theme weeks, most recently for Black History Month. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Highly successful examples include a sports week linked to the Olympics and entertaining senior citizens at a community centre. This was linked to last year's Jubilee. There has also recently been a performance called 'Pirates of the Curry Bean' as part of the school's drama curriculum. Recent visits to places of cultural significance have included a visit to Westminster Abbey, cricket at the Oval and a visit to a local cinema to see a film that supports pupils' study of *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. Pupils recently visited a local store in connection with their work on measurement in mathematics. After-school activities are successful, as is the morning breakfast club.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety**Good**

The quality of pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. Staff at the school have a strong commitment to supporting pupils' welfare. Safeguarding arrangements are robust; staff have been properly trained in child protection and the designated person is clear on her role. Staff have been appropriately trained in first aid and first-aid equipment is well maintained. Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage have been suitably trained in paediatric care. Recruitment procedures are robust and the results of required recruitment and staff vetting checks are properly recorded in a single central register. Pupils are well supervised in school and on trips. All of the required policies are in place, including those for child protection, first aid, behaviour and anti-bullying. They are understood by staff and properly enforced. Risk assessments in school and for trips are properly undertaken and the results are formally recorded and weaknesses are acted upon where necessary. There are regular fire drills and a contractor regularly checks electrical appliances and fire safety equipment. Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained. Pupils are keen to achieve healthy lifestyles. The school works hard to encourage this through its curriculum and special activities. One good example is the work the school has been doing to make pupils aware of how to cycle safely.

Leadership and management**Good**

The quality of leadership and management is good and the proprietor has ensured all regulatory requirements are met. The school's teaching team is tightly knit. Most teachers are long serving and so they have established very good relationships among themselves and with the proprietor who is also headteacher. There is a very strong, shared desire for pupils to do well. The leadership of teaching has been effective in improving the quality of provision and school outcomes. Staff are also proud of their Montessori ethos which makes them think very carefully about their teaching methodology. The proprietor works closely with staff to monitor how well the school is doing and develop sound plans for the future. This includes sharing with staff the financial strength of the school. As a result of this and the small number of pupils, teachers and the proprietor know the school very well. There is thorough and consistent monitoring of lessons by the proprietor, and teachers also regularly observe each other's lessons. There are well-established appraisal arrangements for members of staff. One result of this monitoring is the very careful management of resources in order to obtain best value for the pupils. Monitoring also ensures effective joint planning of activities and use of assessment between teachers ensuring consistency of approach. The quality of the premises and accommodation is good. The classrooms are large, well ventilated and lit and are attractively decorated with pupils' work. There are two, good outdoor play areas covered with artificial grass. There is a modern kitchen and a pleasant hall used for recreation and lunch. Washroom facilities are good. All of the required information is provided, or is made available, to parents, carers and others. However, the clarity and presentation of a few policy documents require improvement. There are good arrangements for reporting pupils' achievements to parents and carers. The procedure for handling complaints meets requirements. Good relationships have been developed with parents and carers who are encouraged by newsletters, letters, events and easy access to teachers to become fully involved in their children's education. In recent questionnaires parents and carers were universally supportive of all that the school is doing. As a result of these highly positive features, the quality of the school has improved substantially since the last full inspection.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	131770
Inspection number	408724
DfE registration number	306/6090

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Montessori
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	3–11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Number of part time pupils	12
Proprietor	Pauline Khoo
Chair	None
Headteacher	Pauline Khoo
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 September 2009
Annual fees (day pupils)	3–5 years: £6,490 to £6,930 5–9 years: £4,620 9–11 years: £4,708
Telephone number	020 8653 1827
Fax number	None
Email address	maplehouseschool@yahoo.co.uk

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