

Maypole Primary School

Franklin Road, Dartford, Kent, DA2 7UZ

Inspection dates 3–4 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Standards have risen at Year 2. Standards in mathematics and reading at Year 6 are above average. Most pupils, including more-able pupils, make good progress.
- Children now make good progress in Reception because the teaching is good.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school. Most lessons are thoroughly planned and provide a good level of challenge, and relationships are a strength.
- The progress of pupils supported through pupil premium funding improved significantly in 2013. They now make good progress in line with the others so that the gap between their attainment and that of others has narrowed considerably.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is now good.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy school and say that they feel safe.
- Senior leaders, managers and governors have taken robust action to improve teaching and achievement and this has been effective. They set a clear direction for the school's future development.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the management of staff performance, challenge school leaders effectively and are realistic about the school's areas for improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Although the school has focused on improving writing, progress in writing is not as rapid as in reading or mathematics.
- The teaching of the younger pupils in Key Stage 1 is not as effective as elsewhere, particularly in the teaching of sounds and letters.
- The marking of pupils' work does not always give a clear indication as to how pupils could improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons, of which six were seen together with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, the school’s subject and senior leaders and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 78 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of school documentation, including: records of school checks on the quality of teaching, the school improvement plan, and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding, and the tracking of pupils’ progress. They also looked closely at pupils’ written work and listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Teresa Davies	Additional Inspector
Angela Podmore	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Maypole Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The number of pupils on roll is increasing year on year. There are currently two classes in each year group up to and including Year 3, and single classes thereafter.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, although the school is becoming more ethnically diverse as numbers increase.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in care and those from other groups) is below the national average.
- The school offers breakfast club and after-school care facilities. This provision is managed by the governing body and was reviewed as part of this inspection.
- The school shares a site with a Children's Centre and an independent nursery school, both of which are inspected separately.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- Extensive building work to provide accommodation and facilities for additional pupils was in progress during the inspection. Several classes were being taught in temporary accommodation.
- Almost half of the teaching staff joined the school in the current term.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that:
 - younger pupils in Key Stage 1 make more rapid progress in their learning
 - the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) to the youngest pupils, particularly boys, is more rigorous and effective
 - there is a more consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work, giving pupils clear guidance as to how they can improve their work and providing opportunities for pupils to respond to marking.

- Enable pupils to make even more rapid progress in writing across the school, with more pupils attaining at the higher levels by the end of Year 6, by:
 - ensuring that the marking of pupils' writing is thorough, identifying clearly the key areas for improvement
 - promoting further the use of information and communication technology to facilitate writing, alongside the school's established handwriting programme.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Although achievement dipped in 2012, robust action by senior leaders ensured a significant improvement in the last school year. Standards by the end of Year 6 have risen and are now well above previous national levels in mathematics and above in reading. Although outcomes in writing are not yet quite as high, the momentum of progress through the school indicates that standards are rising steadily. Progress in mathematics and reading has been good in three of the last four years. Several pupils successfully tackled the demanding Level 6 test in mathematics, so boosting progress further. As yet, fewer pupils made more rapid progress in writing.
- Pupils' writing skills are now promoted through an innovative approach. Almost all writing tasks support work in, for example, science, religious education or history. As a result, there are many examples of good quality extended writing.
- The achievement of pupils eligible for free school meals and supported by pupil premium funding lagged significantly behind that of other pupils in both 2011 and 2012. A radical re-evaluation of the deployment of funding, and rigorous monitoring of the impact, ensured that progress in 2013 was much more rapid. Consequently, the gap in attainment for these pupils narrowed from almost five terms by the end of Year 6 in 2012, to barely half a term in 2013. The progress of these pupils in all year groups was largely in line with the others'.
- Although attainment by the end of Year 2 had been broadly average, standards rose in 2013. Effective interventions by school leaders, particularly in monitoring the progress of different groups, have ensured more rapid progress in Years 1 and 2.
- With an extended catchment area and an increasingly diverse intake, children's skills on entry to Reception have declined in recent years. More children now enter school with skills below the levels found nationally. Up to 2012, many children left Reception with skills that were above the levels found nationally. However, in 2013, a significant proportion of children did not reach the expected good level of development. Even so, and despite significant staff changes, current evidence indicates that both provision and progress have improved since the last inspection and are currently good.
- While reception children and pupils in Years 1 and 2 receive a systematic grounding in the linking of sounds and letters (phonics), the proportion attaining the expected level by the end of Year 1 still lags behind the national figure, especially for boys. Not all of those currently teaching the programme have sufficient skill or confidence to enable pupils to learn at a faster rate. For older pupils, any gaps in their phonics knowledge are addressed through additional teaching.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well. Until 2012, the progress and outcomes of these pupils had been variable. However, more rigorous monitoring of teaching and of the effectiveness of the various support programmes have ensured that these pupils made much more rapid progress last year.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is generally good, with some evidence of outstanding practice. There have been substantial recent changes in both the teaching staff and support staff, with a view to improving pupils' progress. Work is planned well, providing appropriate challenge for the range of pupils. As a result, all groups, including the more able, now make more consistent progress.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' written work, and approaches to presentation and handwriting are consistent across the school. Relationships are good. Rigorous planning was a key strength in an outstanding Year 4 mathematics lesson on multiplication and division. The teacher had taken full account of the range of needs, providing activities which challenged all groups. She showed a readiness to move pupils on promptly, once ready, thereby maintaining a brisk pace throughout. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing using information and communication technology.

- Currently, the teaching of the younger pupils in Key Stage 1 is not as effective as elsewhere. Lessons sometimes lack pace and challenge and there are occasional inconsistencies in behaviour management. This is adversely affecting pupils' learning.
- Overall, the checking and supporting of pupils' progress are good. Pupils have individual targets to focus their efforts to improve. The marking of pupils' work, particularly in writing, occasionally identifies what they need to do next to improve. Too often, however, there is little indication as to how they can move their learning on. Pupils sometimes respond to teachers' marking, but practice is inconsistent.
- Increased awareness by staff, targeted support and rigorous tracking of progress are contributing to more effective provision for those pupils supported by pupil premium funding.
- For the older pupils, the teaching of reading is generally effective. Guided reading sessions are tightly organised, with accurate pupil groupings and appropriate texts, and successfully develop pupils' interest and higher-order reading skills. However, senior leaders recognise that further staff training is needed to ensure that the teaching of phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) to the younger pupils is fully effective. These lessons often lack pace and, at this stage in the year, staff knowledge of the phonics programme and methodology is not fully secure.
- Although there was some disruption in staffing in the last year, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage currently benefit from mostly good teaching, effective assessment practice and well-planned lessons. This ensures that progress is now consistently good.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. There are effective procedures to address poor behaviour and few recorded incidents. Behaviour logs are closely monitored. There was one recent fixed-term exclusion. No racist incidents have been recorded recently. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that adults will resolve any difficulties. Few of the parents and carers who gave their views indicated any concerns about behaviour.
- Pupils speak positively of behaviour. Pupils' attitudes to learning are mostly good. However, when teaching is less than inspiring, pupils do not display a thirst for knowledge and their learning suffers.
- Pupils feel that bullying is not an issue. They understand that bullying may take different forms. They are particularly aware of the risks associated with social networking sites, a priority area for the school recently. Pupils undertake responsibilities around the school which enable them to contribute to the community.
- Pupils have a good appreciation of risk. They know how to keep themselves safe in various circumstances. Year 6 pupils are well prepared for moving to secondary school.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils arrive at school punctually. The well-supported breakfast and after-school clubs provide a safe environment for pupils prior to and after the school day.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders, particularly in the last two years, have been uncompromising in their determination to improve teaching, learning and standards. They set a clear direction for school development. A comprehensive staff reorganisation, and significant changes of staffing in the last two years, have revitalised the school, so that previous weaknesses have now been largely addressed, progress has improved for all pupils and standards are rising again.
- The school's view of itself is accurate. The school improvement plan identifies appropriate priorities and is focused on promoting sustained good achievement.
- The monitoring of teaching is rigorous and effective. Identified weaknesses are followed up through the robust performance management system. There is a clear link between teachers' performance and pay progression. The school holds support staff, as well as teaching staff, accountable for pupils' progress so that every adult is focused upon learning and progress.

- The curriculum is managed well. Clear policies and procedures support the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. The curriculum engages pupils well. The teaching of literacy is interwoven with the teaching of science and the other subjects. As a result, all writing is 'writing for a specific purpose'. This provides extensive opportunities for pupils to write at length. Pupils experience a good range of workshops, visits and visitors. There are several extra-curricular clubs. Although it is too early to evaluate its impact, the school has a coherent plan to improve the quality of sports coaching and pupils' health through the development of staff skills in coaching physical education, and to increase participation in after-school sports activities.
- As an established 'good' school, Maypole has, recently, had limited direct involvement with local authority staff. However, it has engaged fully with the local community of schools, and mutual support groups and collaboratives promoted by the local authority.
- School leaders have prioritised improvements in the impact of pupil premium funding. This funding is currently contributing to good gains in learning for eligible pupils.
- Pupils' social and moral development is promoted effectively and permeates all aspects of the school's work. Pupils' social development is promoted well. Community links and those with places of worship and with parents and carers are well established and displays celebrate pupils' appreciation of other cultures and religions.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are skilled and experienced. They bring a range of professional experience to their work in school. They undertake training and confidently check information relating to pupils' performance and the school's effectiveness. Governors know the school well and evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' progress, comparing their performance with national data. They hold school leaders rigorously to account. They ensure equality of opportunity, tackle discrimination and promote good relationships. Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and of how performance is managed. They ensure that pay and promotion are firmly linked to teachers' effectiveness and have supported the headteacher in tackling underperformance. They manage the budget well and carefully evaluate the impact of decisions about the use of pupil premium funding to close gaps in pupils' achievement. Governors ensure, along with senior leaders, that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements. All other statutory duties are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118246
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	426600

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	347
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine Manak
Headteacher	Linda Wilmann
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2008
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