

# Maplewood School

Faulkner Way, High Wycombe, HP13 5HB

**Inspection dates** 10–11 December 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have not made all the improvements necessary that were identified at the previous inspection in March 2012.
- Leaders and managers have not gathered enough information about pupils' progress or attainment to know whether or not pupils are achieving as well as they should.
- Leaders, including governors, have not gathered sufficient information about the quality of teaching to make sure that it improves.
- Teaching provides too few opportunities for pupils to be actively engaged in precise, challenging activities. Teachers do not routinely assess the small steps of progress that pupils make.
- Some pupils lose interest in lessons because they are asked to complete repeated similar tasks or are insufficiently interested or challenged.
- The sixth form is inadequate. There is insufficient attention to pupils' individual abilities in the planning of the activities.

### The school has the following strengths

- There is a dedicated staff team who care for the pupils well. There are good relationships throughout the school that contribute strongly to marked improvements in behaviour for individual pupils.
- There is some consistent good practice and evidence that these pupils are making good progress.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection of 10–11 December was extended by one day. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors visited the school on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March and a series of short visits to lessons were made by the inspector, accompanied by the headteacher. The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, representatives from the local authority and the Chair of the Governing Body. A range of documentary evidence was scrutinised.
- During the December visit the headteacher was not in school. The inspector observed 11 lessons taught by six teachers, therapists and support staff, of which eight were jointly observed with the deputy headteacher or assistant headteacher. In addition, short visits were made to other lessons and the inspector listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the deputy and assistant headteachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other members, a representative from the local authority, and there were informal conversations with support staff and pupils.
- There were four responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector received and analysed 21 staff questionnaires. The inspector looked at school documents including planning for school improvement, records relating to behaviour and attendance, minutes of the governing body, local authority visit reports and documents relating to safeguarding.
- The inspector looked at pupils' records of achievement and other examples of their work.

## Inspection team

Janet Dinsmore, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Hilary Macdonald

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

*The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.*

## Information about this school

- This is a special school for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties. The needs of the pupils joining the school are complex and all pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- Since the previous inspection the other school sites are no longer used. All pupils now attend the main site.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils than would normally be expected join and leave the school during the course of the academic year. Pupils usually transfer to this school from other specialist provision.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in the care of the local authority or with a parent or carer in the armed services) is above average.
- No pupils are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average. The majority of these are of Pakistani origin. Some of these pupils speak English as an additional language.

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

- Improve teaching to good or better by making sure that:
  - activities are well matched to individual pupils' abilities and enable teachers to make accurate assessments of pupils' progress in each lesson
  - behaviour for learning improves because all pupils are actively engaged in individually designed activities for a greater proportion of the time in lessons
  - activities are appropriately planned so all pupils make the best progress they can
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by making sure that:
  - leaders introduce robust and systematic methods for assessing pupils' levels of attainment, for setting challenging but realistic targets and for tracking pupils' progress and using this information to drive school improvement
  - regular checks of teachers' performance in the classroom are done through a comprehensive range of activities including an evaluation of improvements in pupils' progress
  - there are opportunities for the best practice that exists in the school to be shared
  - the planning for what is taught and when, engages pupils' interests and develops a wide range of skills, particularly in the sixth form.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Insufficient information regarding pupils' levels of attainment and progress is gathered. This has been the case over a protracted period of time. Consequently, it is not possible for the headteacher, senior leaders or governors to accurately judge pupils' progress and achievement.
- The very limited data that have been collected over time are known by the headteacher and the local authority to be inaccurate.
- During the inspection of December 2013 and March 2014 pupils were observed to be making inconsistent progress in lessons. For example in one effective lesson all pupils were actively engaged in exploring the different textures of objects that had been carefully selected for each individual, whilst in another lesson pupils sat and waited, with nothing to do, for far too long before any activity commenced.
- There is no known gap in the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium and that of their peers in school.
- Pupils in the sixth form have opportunities to develop life skills, for example, using coins, recognising numbers on lockers at the swimming pool, and using simple computer programs, but these are not systematically checked against what might be expected for each individual. They are not developed or extended enough for each individual.
- Pupils' individual communication skills have not been consistently developed as they move through the school. Pupils show that they are able to make choices, but this ability is not used well enough for them to be able to make better progress.
- Some pupils are learning to use signs and symbols well to answer questions and show their counting skills. Pupils who speak English as an additional language demonstrate understanding of spoken English as well as using communication tools.
- A few more able pupils learn to read text and can explain the words they have read.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement. The quality is too variable across the school and too little of it is good or outstanding. Typically, teaching throughout the school has insufficient pace and lacks clear enough purpose for pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers in Key Stages 4 and 5 do not have high enough expectations of what individual pupils can achieve. Activities are not planned well enough to ensure that all pupils make good or better progress. Activities frequently repeat the same task, for example choosing between two symbols, and do not present learning in an exciting and stimulating way.
- Targets for pupils' progress are not precise enough or used well enough to plan individual activities over a sequence of lessons to ensure good progress in learning.
- Activities for more-able pupils are not always challenging enough.
- In some classes there is very effective teamwork between teacher and teaching assistants and good knowledge of each of the pupils. Teaching assistants across the school are trained well to support signing for communication and carry out physiotherapy and occupational therapy programmes. However, teaching assistants are insufficiently well used to support learning.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2 class teaching teams work well together to ensure that pupils with complex difficulties are presented with a wide range of interesting activities. For example, in one dynamic lesson, multi-sensory work was individually adapted for each pupil with real objects to touch and smell to illustrate the song, 'Here we go round the mulberry bush'. However, the quality of teaching varies from day to day and classes are affected by the high proportion of temporary teaching arrangements currently in place.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage activities are planned to extend individual children's learning and staff observe and use children's interests well to extend their progress. Nevertheless,

opportunities are missed to maximise children's communication skills and, as in other classes, too much time is lost when moving from one activity to another.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- In some lessons pupils lose interest and may be asked to repeat the same or similar task frequently, or are not sufficiently engaged in learning activities. This is preventing their good progress. Attendance is below average but this is due to significant medical issues for a few pupils. Any absence is followed up effectively.
- There are examples of marked improvements in the behaviour of individuals, particularly those who have come from other settings. There are effective behaviour plans that enable all staff to promote positive behaviour.
- Behaviour around the school, at lunchtime and playtime is good and pupils are showing that they are learning to manage their behaviour well.
- Pupils indicate that they feel safe and enjoy school. They engage well with visitors and many are keen to communicate. Pupils get on well together.

### **The leadership and management**

### **are inadequate**

- Despite being an area to improve at the previous inspection, there is still no sufficient system in place to collect data on pupils' progress across the school. As a result, leaders and governors cannot effectively track and evaluate either the quality of teaching or pupils' achievement over time. Insufficient use is made of national comparison information. The management of teachers' performance is not sufficiently robust and does not adequately link teachers' performance with pupils' progress.
- Checking of teaching and learning has not been carried out with sufficient rigour or with a wide enough range of measures to have an accurate picture of teaching. Insufficient guidance has been provided to enable teachers to improve their practice.
- The previous inspection recommended that the good practice that exists be shared across the school. This has not yet happened.
- A review conducted by the local authority in May 2013 accurately identified areas requiring urgent improvement and a programme of support was agreed. Although some training has taken place, this has been too recent to have resulted in demonstrable impact on pupils' achievement.
- The pupil premium is used for eligible pupils. It provides a range of activities to improve pupils' physical, social and communication development. It has not been fully evaluated because there is poor information about pupils' progress across the school and over time.
- Parents and carers are involved in the annual review process and their children's progress is reported to them each year. There is effective daily communication about care issues in home-school books but in some classes opportunities are missed to report to parents and carers the small achievements that have happened so that they can support their children's learning at home.
- There are some examples of actions by some of the senior leaders since the previous inspection to improve the curriculum and make sure that aspects of literacy and numeracy are taught throughout the school day and shown on the timetables. These have not been in place for long enough to show improvements in pupils' progress.
- Primary school sports funding has been used to train staff in specific therapies so that pupils' physical development can be improved and to increase participation in gymnastics and tennis.
- Statutory safeguarding requirements are met. Staff are trained well and there is effective working with other health and social care agencies to keep pupils safe. There are good partnerships with speech and occupational therapists. This has ensured that staff are appropriately trained in signing, communication and physical development programmes to support pupils' progress in these areas.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- Governors are aware that the actions required to improve the school and the timescales identified at the previous inspection have not been met. The governors have been unable to hold the headteacher fully to account for the progress of the pupils at the school because this information is not provided to them. They do not have sufficient knowledge of pupils' performance at the school. The performance management of the headteacher has not been effective enough to secure the necessary improvements identified at the previous inspection. The poor performance management of teachers and the lack of data about pupils' performance mean that they do not have enough information to make sure that good teachers are rewarded and underperformance is tackled. Governors know how the pupil premium has been spent and that there is anecdotal evidence of it improving pupils' physical and social development.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131915
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	426403

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

<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	47
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	12
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jeanette Hyder
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Rumble
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 February–1 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01494 525728
<b>Email address</b>	office@maplewood.bucks.sch.uk



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