

Maple Grove Primary School

St Agnell's Lane, Grove Hill, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 7BG

Inspection dates 27–28 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Teaching and pupils' achievement have improved since the last inspection. The headteacher and governing body are very ambitious for the school and work well together in raising standards.
- Pupils feel safe in school, and parents and carers praise the school's excellent approach to care and support.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They behave well in class and around the school and this contributes significantly to their good progress.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The pupils are encouraged to read widely and often. The well-stocked library and collections of books in every classroom help pupils to develop a love of reading.
- The school works closely with parents and carers to help them support their children's learning at home.
- Pupils look after their school and each other very well and as a result the atmosphere is harmonious and purposeful.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although the curriculum helps pupils to develop their basic skills well, it does not yet inspire them to develop a passion for learning.
- Teachers do not always guide pupils effectively by showing them what they need to do to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons across all the year groups, including three seen jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspection team held meetings with leaders, governors, staff, a representative from the local authority and pupils. They also attended two assemblies and heard groups of pupils read and visited some individual support sessions. They also visited the breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils’ books. They examined a range of documents including the school’s own evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, its improvement plan, records of pupils’ progress and documents relating to keeping pupils safe.
- The views of 32 parents and carers were analysed through the Parent View website, and an inspector spoke informally to parents and carers to seek their views about the school.
- The views of 27 staff who returned questionnaires were also considered.

Inspection team

Gillian Scobie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pauline MacMillan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding is well above the national average. This is additional government funding for particular groups, including in this school pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is in line with the national average, but the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - showing pupils clearly through comments in marking what they need to do next in order to make further progress
 - giving pupils timely guidance in lessons to help them move forward in their learning so that they are all consistently challenged, especially the more-able pupils.
- Enhance the curriculum by giving pupils more inspirational experiences to help them develop a thirst for further knowledge.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school with skills that are well below those typical for this age, especially in language development and communication. Pupils of all abilities make good progress. At the end of Year 6 in 2013, attainment was above average in reading and mathematics, and broadly average in writing. School records and the work seen show that Year 6 pupils are reaching similar standards this year.
- Pupils make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics in the nursery and Reception. Teachers make good use of excellent resources, both in the classroom and outside, to ensure children learn quickly. Their 'learning journey' booklets provide strong evidence of their development. A colourful, well-stocked and very popular area where children can play with numbers supports their numerical development very well.
- By the end of Year 2 most pupils are able to read with confidence. They use their understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters make) with confidence and are able to decipher many more difficult and unfamiliar words without help. They have many opportunities for writing linked to the activities they have done and stories they have heard, and many are able to use basic punctuation and grammar rules accurately.
- The school has worked effectively to improve the pupils' writing skills since the last inspection. Teachers across all the year groups ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to write at length. This was particularly noticeable in the Reception class, where some children were writing whole stories rather than single words or short sentences.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress across the school, regardless of their individual starting points. The teachers know their pupils very well and give them excellent support that is well matched to their individual needs. Their progress is particularly good in reading.
- The school has worked successfully to improve the progress made by all pupils supported by pupil premium funding. School records and the work in pupils' exercise books show that the attainment gap compared to their classmates is rapidly closing in reading, writing and mathematics, and they are generally making equally good progress.
- In the 2013 Year 1 phonics screening test the majority of pupils achieved above the nationally expected level, and nearly all the pupils who retook the test in Year 2 were successful.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers know their classes very well and show high expectations of their pupils, encouraging them to take pride in their work.
- Clear explanations show pupils what they need to do, and are often linked to a sample answer that builds confidence and trust, so pupils try hard. For example, a Year 5 class were given a very clear example of how to compile a block graph and in Reception the teacher used a visualiser to help a pupil share sentences with the rest of the class. Carefully constructed questions are often used to help pupils identify each stage of a new task correctly so that they are able to make good progress.

- Teachers regularly check the progress pupils are making during each lesson, but do not always quickly recognise when individuals or small groups of pupils need further specific guidance to correct a misconception or help them to further extend their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and ensure that activities in lessons are interesting and enjoyable. However, some children do not always have high expectations of their own learning and do not yet have a well-developed thirst for knowledge. Lessons sometimes lack more specific impetus and the 'wow' factor to capture the pupils' imagination and inspire them to reach even higher standards.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and use the school's marking system consistently to show pupils what they do well. They also give pupils advice on what they need to do to improve their work, but this is not always sufficiently detailed and focused on the next step to ensure that pupils are able to act on the advice given to improve their work.
- Small group work and individual support sessions are well planned to meet pupils' specific learning needs. As a result pupils who have specific educational needs and those who may be temporarily experiencing problems that make learning difficult are consistently well supported and able to make good progress.
- Teachers set homework regularly and this often takes the form of a learning log linked to the work covered in class. It is usually a task that adopts a creative approach to further learning and often encourages parents to work with pupils to complete the task. Projects combine a mixture of mathematics, reading and writing in a new setting. For instance, following a Year 6 module on building circuits in science, pupils were asked to design a fairground ride which included a description, scale drawings and reasons for the choice.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in lessons and respond quickly and appropriately to requests from their teachers so that everyone is able to learn without interruption. They share ideas willingly and listen carefully to each other.
- Pupils across the school have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They know that there are different types of bullying and say that incidents do not happen very often in school, but when they do occur they know that their teachers will deal with them quickly and fairly.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. It ensures that pupils are safe outside school by making road safety and other issues, including awareness of internet safety, important element of assemblies and appropriate lessons. Related visits include regular trips to the fire station and the county road safety vehicle.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They have confidence in their teachers and other adults who look after them well. This is endorsed by their parents and carers, who were almost unanimous in their trust in the school.
- There is a very positive and caring ethos in the school. The pupils look after each other, the buildings and the outdoor spaces very well. The 'eco warriors' use displays around the school effectively to persuade others to conserve energy and switch off lights when they are not needed.

- Pupils, especially the older ones, are encouraged to act on their own initiative. They act as monitors and play leaders and make sure the younger ones are safe. During a wet lunch time inspectors observed a groups of Reception and nursery children enjoying a story read by a Year 6 pupil.
- Attendance has rapidly improved since the last inspection and is now in line with national averages for all groups of pupils.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, other senior leaders and governors are ambitious and have a shared vision for continually improving the school. They have built a strong, united team that has the full support of all the teachers and other adults in the school.
- The headteacher knows his staff very well and has provided training to extend the skills of the staff in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school. This, combined with rigorous monitoring of classroom practice, has ensured that teaching is now typically good.
- Leaders place a strong emphasis on safeguarding and building strong links with parents to ensure that pupils are well protected both inside and outside the school. They also promote clear expectations through the behaviour policy, which is consistently applied by adults and clearly understood by pupils.
- The school's leaders have completed a realistic evaluation of its strengths and have accurately identified the areas for improvement. This informs their development plan, known as the 'single plan', which sets practical targets to move the school forward. As a result there have been a range of improvements across the school since the last inspection, especially in teaching and learning, attendance and working more closely with parents and carers.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well through the curriculum. Opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills are well developed in all year groups and, as a result, pupils make good progress. The school is constantly looking for opportunities to weave basic social skills and life experiences into the curriculum to extend and enhance pupils' understanding of the world around them. The school helps parents develop activities for the holidays that will consolidate learning done in school.
- Staff have worked well as a team to improve the attainment and progress of pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding. The money is used effectively to support a range of specific training for staff, to develop the role of a learning mentor and to enable pupils to take part in school activities.
- The school has developed good relationships with parents and carers, for example by providing a series of workshops and reward assemblies to emphasise the link between attendance and good progress. Clubs run before and after school are well attended, and parents value them because they are welcoming and they know their children are well looked after. As a result attendance has improved rapidly for some pupils.
- Pupils' participation in sport has more than doubled across the school since it started to spend the additional primary school sports funding. It is now a member of the local sports partnership and has two bronze ambassadors for sport in Year 6 who run the 'sports council'. The funding has also been spent on increasing the emphasis on improving children's fine motor skills in the nursery and Reception through the part-time employment of a sports apprentice who also

supports teachers in lessons. A professional tennis coach runs 'inclusive' tennis sessions each week for pupils who have specific disabilities and special educational needs.

- The headteacher and senior leadership team have worked closely with the local authority since the last inspection to improve the quality of teaching and learning, especially in writing and science. The local authority adviser speaks highly of the headteacher's ambition for the school and his staff, and his ability to act quickly and effectively on the advice he is given.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governors are ambitious for the school and work closely with the senior management team to ensure its continuing improvement. They understand their role clearly, visit regularly and have made excellent progress in developing good relationships with parents and carers. They receive regular reports from the headteacher and have a good understanding of the data presented to them on the quality of teaching and pupils' performance. They regularly challenge the information they receive. Targets set for the headteacher and his staff are now linked closely to outcomes to ensure that good results are appropriately rewarded. Governors know how the school budget is spent and have a clear understanding of the positive impact of the pupil premium and primary sports funding on progress and standards. They are proud of the progress the school has made since the last inspection.

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	135221
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	430751

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Parr
Headteacher	Geoffrey Allen
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2012
Telephone number	01442 426310
Fax number	01442 426311
Email address	head@maplegrove.herts.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

