

Maplewell Hall School

Maplewell Road, Woodhouse Eaves, Loughborough, LE12 8QY

Inspection dates 19–20 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Outstanding	1
Overall effectiveness of the residential experience		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Strong leadership and direction from the headteacher and senior leaders with good support from subject leaders and governors has led to good improvement in students' achievement and the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The school is continually improving.
- Leaders ensure that students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Students' behaviour is good. Their good attitudes to learning are reflected in their eagerness to participate in school activities and their good attendance and punctuality.
- The school's efforts to ensure students are safe are good.
- Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and know the needs of each student well. They plan interesting real life and practical activities to capture students' imaginations so that they learn well and make good progress.
- Learning support assistants provide good support for individual students. They work well with teachers in providing a positive atmosphere for learning. All staff have excellent relationships with pupils and manage behaviour well.
- Students' achievement is good. They make good progress in the basic skills of communication, literacy, and numeracy and good progress in their examination courses.
- The sixth form has greatly improved since the last inspection and is now outstanding. Outstanding leadership of the sixth form has led to outstanding teaching, and an exceptionally well-thought-out curriculum. This enables students to make rapid progress towards their academic targets, independent living, work and college.
- The residential provision is good. Good leadership has ensured that the outcomes for residential students are good, the quality of care and students' safety are good. The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and few weaknesses still remain.
- Students do not always know how well they are using English grammar, punctuation and spelling when writing in subjects other than English.
- The thinking of a few most able students is not always extended.
- Leaders have not developed nor implemented the new arrangements for assessment.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons and saw nearly all teachers teach. Most of these observations were carried out with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at samples of students' work across the school and sixth form. They also listened to a few students read. Inspectors spent time with residential students during their evening activities and joined them for breakfast.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, including the care and intervention team leader, two members of the governing body, a local authority representative and leader of the teaching school alliance. Meetings were also held with three different groups of students, including students' in the sixth form and informal discussions took place with students at break time at lunchtime and in the residential accommodation.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views. They looked at 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the response from the school's most recent survey of parents. They also met with a group of six parents and held telephone discussions with four parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including governors' minutes, the school improvement plan, the summary self-evaluation document, safeguarding policies and procedures in the school and residential provision, records of students' progress over time, including records of sixth form students' progress, incidents of behaviour and attendance figures.

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Margaret Jones	Additional Inspector
Mark Emly	Additional Inspector
Joanne Vyas	Social Care Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school provides education and residential care for students with moderate learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder. A significant number have additional special educational needs such as behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- Most students are White British and none speak English as an additional language. There are almost twice as many boys than girls.
- A well-above proportion of students, 40%, are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding, which is additional government funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The school has residential provision for up to 24 students at any given time for one or two nights per week for a six week period.
- The school does not make any use of alternative schools or locations to provide education for its students.
- There have been a number of significant changes since the last inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2013, the senior leadership team has been restructured, and there has been a significant turnover of staff with more subject specialists appointed. The sixth form provision has been extended with an increase in vocational provision which is also accessed by students from mainstream schools. Year 7 students have been relocated into refurbished accommodation. The school has entered into a local teaching alliance with five other schools to promote excellence in leadership and teaching.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eliminate the few remaining weaknesses in teaching, increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and raise achievement by making sure that:
 - students always know how well they are using English grammar, punctuation and spelling when writing in subjects other than English
 - the thinking of the few most able students is always extended
 - leaders develop and implement the new arrangements for assessment by September 2015.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Under the inspired leadership of the headteacher with strong support from senior leaders, good support from subject leaders, governors and the majority of staff, significant weaknesses in the quality of teaching have been dramatically reduced and students' achievements have risen substantially with more students taking more GCSE courses than at the time of the previous inspection. Leaders have created an atmosphere where teaching, students' behaviour and their impact on students' learning thrives. The school's inclusive ethos and underpinning philosophy is strong throughout the residential provision, ensuring residential students are in a supportive and nurturing community within which they are valued and safe.
- Leadership of the residential provision has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Provision is well organised and the senior leadership team are committed and focused to continually improving the service to ensure a high quality provision for residential students in which they can thrive.
- The care and intervention team leader provides good leadership and management. All national minimum standards for the residential accommodation are met and there is strong support from parents. Together with other leaders in the school, the care and intervention team leader ensures all the legal safeguarding requirements are met and are effective, particularly in the vetting and recruitment of new staff and visitors to ensure they are safe to work with students.
- Care staff are qualified, experienced and competent. They are caring and committed to the children and young people who reside at the school. High levels of staff engagement and supervision in all student activities promotes good safety and well-being. Patterns and trends of behaviour are closely monitored ensuring staff can be proactive and have a good understanding of the individual needs of students. Students also benefit from opportunities to reflect on incidents to help them manage their behaviour better in the future.
- The school has an accurate view of itself based on rigorous monitoring of all aspects of its work. It uses the outcomes well to develop sharply focused and well-chosen areas for development to drive improvements forward. Subject leaders develop their own action plans based on accurate evaluations of their subjects. They use the outcomes of their monitoring to shape and agree whole school priorities for improvement with senior leaders.
- Leadership of teaching is good and not outstanding because a few isolated weaknesses in teaching remain. Rigorous arrangements are in place to regularly monitor the quality of teaching and its impact on students' learning over time.
- The arrangements for managing the performance of teachers are robust and have improved since the last inspection, with a much sharper focus on using student's prior attainment as reflected in national tests to measure expectations for learning rather than their attainment from assessments on entry to school. Senior leaders and subject leaders, visit lessons at least every term and they review the progress students make every six weeks. They use this information to arrive at an overview of the quality of teaching, identify strengths and areas for development. Where weaknesses are identified they initially provide support and training before considering capability procedures. Leaders ensure that good teaching is rewarded wherever possible.
- The curriculum is broad and highly relevant to the needs of individual students. Students with additional special educational needs benefit from a curriculum matched to their individual needs, where particular resources such as lap top computers are provided to enable them to access learning. There is a strong emphasis on developing the basic skills of communication, literacy and numeracy throughout the school, which enables older students to leave school with a relevant qualification in English and mathematics. Subject leaders have worked closely with senior leaders to develop the new curriculum, particularly in Year 7 which now has a much sharper focus on developing students' use of phonics in reading and writing and using and applying mathematics skills in real-life contexts such as budgeting. Older students, including those in the sixth form have very good careers advice and an extremely well-conceived programme for work related learning and the development of independence skills which thoroughly prepares them for life

after school.

- Leaders are beginning to develop new arrangements for assessment. They are doing this, for example, through the setting of more challenging targets for learning in Year 7 based on students' prior attainment in Year 6 as agreed with Year 6 teachers, instead of using the outcomes of assessment on entry to the school. However leaders recognise that the development of new systems for assessment across all subjects is at an early stage.
- Good opportunities to enrich students' learning through a range of visits together with the range of visitors to the school greatly enhance students' spiritual moral, social and cultural development. For example, they learn about British values and the rule of law in personal social and health education and citizenship. In art and music students look at the work of different artists and different musical styles. Their moral development is also enhanced. For example, in geography students consider issues of fair trade and in religion and ethics; they look at the morality of the use of weapons of mass destruction in modern warfare. Students have good opportunities to reflect on the needs of the less fortunate through fundraising and the Christian celebrations of Harvest Festival and Christmas. As a result, students are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Strong partnerships with local schools, the community and outside agencies have a good impact on students' progress and personal development. For example Year 7 teachers now meet year 6 teachers from primary schools to agree the prior attainment levels of all Year 7 students. This enables more challenging targets to be set which reflect the potential learning of each student.
- Leaders make good use of Year 7 catch-up funding to provide extra support from learning support assistants to enable students' to make rapid progress in literacy and numeracy.
- Pupil premium funding is used very well to purchase additional one-to-one and small group support as well as to fund trips and the purchase of additional resources to enhance the learning of those students know to be eligible for these funds. As a result they make at least the same progress as their classmates and sometimes better progress in English and mathematics.
- Leaders promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination well. All pupils, except occasionally a few of the most able make the same progress as on another and there are very few recorded incidents of discrimination of any kind.
- The very positive views of parents both in their questionnaires and in discussions reflect their strong support for the school and its work.
- The local authority regularly monitors the work of the school and is providing good support and levels of challenge, particularly through the work of the local teaching alliance that have recently carried out a rigorous review of the school's work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors provide good support and levels of challenge for staff. They have a good knowledge of their own strengths and areas for development, having recently carried out an audit of their skills. They have a detailed and accurate view of the quality of teaching and how it has moved forward since the appointment of the new headteacher. Governors have good oversight of the arrangements for managing the performance of teachers and provided good support for senior leaders in tackling underperformance and rewarding good teaching when the headteacher introduced the new appraisal process. They make good use of data for influencing the areas for school improvement and the management of staff performance. They also use this effectively in challenging the school's use of its additional funding such as pupil premium funding
 - Governors ensure that the legal requirements for safeguarding are met. They regularly review policies and procedures so that they are up to date and carry out health and safety checks, ensuring all potential risks are fully assessed. Governors are making sure that students' spiritual moral social and cultural development is promoted including the development of British values and tackling extremism.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Students are usually well behaved in lessons and around the school. Parents rightly say that their children make at least good progress in their behaviour during their time in school. There are few recorded incidents of disruption, harassment or racism, which demonstrates that students respond well to the good management of behaviour by staff. This is because staff usually implement the systems of rewards and sanctions effectively to promote good behaviour.
- Students have good attitudes to learning. They are well prepared for lessons and take a pride in their work as seen in the neat presentation of their written work. Students nearly always focus on learning and complete the tasks they are given. Students' good behaviour in lessons has a positive impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Students' behaviour in the sixth form is outstanding. They show high levels of maturity in taking responsibility for their own learning and their outstanding behaviour impacts positively on their personal development.
- The behaviour of students in residential provisions is good as seen, for example, during evening activities and breakfast time. They respond well to the consistent management of their behaviour by residential care staff, who have strong relationships with them.
- Parents, governors and the majority of staff recognise that behaviour is good.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because occasionally reward systems do not have enough impact on students' behaviour and a few students do not have positive relationships with others.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The schools' systems for monitoring and promoting good attendance are robust with first day calls home, regular contact, including visits where necessary by the family support worker and rewards for good attendance. As a result students' attendance and punctuality are good.
- Staff are rigorous in assessing any potential risk across the school and residential provision. High levels of staff supervision are maintained at break times lunchtimes during residential activities and school trips.
- Students handle equipment safely, use computers safely and abide by safe rules in competitive sports and practical areas. Students say that bullying is rare and when it occurs it is always dealt with effectively by staff. In discussion different students showed an awareness of the different types of prejudiced based bullying and explained how these could be avoided. Parents expressed few concerns about bullying. Parents and the majority of staff are right to believe that students are safe.
- Safeguarding in the residential part of the school is of high priority. Residential students feel safe and are safe. Care staff implement individual positive behaviour strategies to help students manage their own behaviour. Staff are well trained in physical intervention where there is a strong focus on proactive strategies and the de-escalation of volatile situations. Subsequently, students are well behaved in residence and physical intervention is very rare. Furthermore, there is a low incidence within the whole school. Residential students do not go missing from this school. However, staff know the procedure to follow should a student go missing.
- The residential accommodation provides a safe and secure environment. Checks are robustly completed for fire and electrical equipment. Residential students are well-versed in the school's fire evacuation procedures. The residential accommodation is clean and well maintained.
- The good health of residential students is promoted well. Staff receive specialist healthcare training when it is required such as training in epilepsy. Medication is managed safely. It is stored securely and staff follow safe procedures for the administration of medication. Additionally, residential, pastoral and

academic staff work closely together and provide strong support for families enabling parents to better understand and manage the behavioural and health difficulties their children experience.

- Residential students have a good understanding of making healthy food choices. Healthy options are offered which residential students readily help themselves to. The menu is adapted to meet the individual likes and dislikes of residential students which means they are assured at least three good meals a day. Students have good access to healthcare agencies such as mental health services, school nurses and autism specialists.

The quality of teaching is good

- The impact of teaching on students' learning during their time in school is good. Students' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning, as seen in the pride they are taking with their work, are having a good impact on their progress.
- Teachers' good knowledge of their subjects and good knowledge of the different needs of each student were seen during the inspection and reflected in pupils' work. Teachers' use of this information to plan interesting real life and practical activities to capture students' imaginations so that they learn well and make good progress were seen across the school. For example, in a *literacy for life* lesson, students considered the use of camera angles in a television episode of *East Enders* to write about which ones were the most dramatic and why certain camera angles should be used to create even more dramatic effects.
- The teaching of communication, literacy reading and numeracy are good. Teachers make good use of visual timetables, symbols, signing and practical resources to enable students with autistic spectrum disorder to communicate. Good teaching of phonics, (the sounds letters make) to teach reading and spelling was seen, for example in students' reading records and when students were reading aloud.
- Good support from learning support assistants for individual students was seen in nearly all lessons. The school's own monitoring of teaching over time and external monitoring of teaching confirm that they work well with teachers to create a positive atmosphere for learning. All staff have excellent relationships with pupils and manage behaviour well.
- Outstanding teaching in the sixth form is leading to students, rapid progress, particularly towards their targets, in vocational skills and preparation for the next stage of their lives.
- When the headteacher took up post shortly after the last inspection, the school's observations of lessons showed that approximately a third of teaching required improvement. The determination of the headteacher and senior leaders to address weaknesses in teaching has resulted in rapid improvement over time so that most teaching is good or better. This is also reflected in school data and in students' books. However not enough is outstanding and small pockets of teaching still require improvement.
- Very occasionally, the thinking of the most able students is not extended rapidly enough. This was seen in their English and mathematics books where their learning lacked sufficient challenge and so they found their tasks too easy. In discussion, a few of the most able students confirmed this. An examination of students written work in other subjects, such as science and religion and ethics, showed that students do not always know how well they are using English grammar, punctuation and spelling to develop their writing skills in different subjects because they are not provided with enough feedback.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter the school with low levels of attainment due to the nature and complexity of their special educational needs. This is reflected in published data. It is therefore appropriate to judge their achievement based on the progress they make over time from their different starting points.
- The schools' own monitoring of students' learning and progress over time show that achievement is good as a result of skilful teaching, good learning opportunities to promote the learning of basic skills and good

leadership. A significant number of students make outstanding progress from their low starting points.

- There has been a threefold increase in the proportion of students entering for GCSE examination courses and succeeding in gaining at least one A* to G grade since the last inspection with a significant number gaining A to G grades in three GCSE subjects. This is because expectations for learning are significantly higher as students benefit from teachers with subject specialisms. All students leave school with a recognised qualification in English and mathematics.
- Learning targets for reading, writing and mathematics are more challenging and now firmly based on the national progression data, which is regularly checked by staff at progress meetings. This shows that most pupils are making at least expected progress with a significant number making more than expected progress across the school.
- As a result of good use of additional catch-up funding all students in year 7 are on track to meet their challenging targets.
- Good use of the additional funding for pupil premium has ensured that disadvantaged pupils are making at least the same and often better progress in English and mathematics as their classmates.
- There are no significant differences in the progress of boys and girls.
- Students with autistic spectrum disorder make at least good progress in communication skills as a result of the skilful use of visual resources, symbols and real life objects to enable them to communicate effectively and make the same progress as their classmates.
- Students with behavioural emotional and social difficulties re-engage with learning quickly and make good progress because plans for managing their behaviour are effective.
- The school's records show that older students who left school in Year 11 and students in the sixth form who left in July 2014 all entered further education, training or employment.
- Sixth form students make rapid progress towards their targets, in their examination courses and in preparation for life beyond school as a result of outstanding teaching.
- The majority of the few most able pupils make good progress in English and mathematics, although a very small number do not make as much progress as they could. This is because their thinking is not always extended sufficiently

The sixth form provision

is outstanding

- The newly developed sixth form, which has recently been successfully extended to include students of all abilities and special educational needs, is outstanding. Outstanding leadership has resulted in outstanding provision and outcomes for students. The quality of teaching and the curriculum are outstanding enabling new students, in the relatively short time they have entered the sixth form, to make rapid progress from their different starting points.
- Students are exceptionally well behaved and are always courteous and respectful towards others. They have excellent attitudes to learning and their outstanding behaviour contributes well to their spiritual, moral social and cultural development.
- Leaders are promoting the safety and well-being of students exceptionally well, especially through the life skills and independence skills programme. For example, students are shown how to travel safely and rigorous assessments of any potential risks are carried out before they begin the programme. Their skills of independent safe travel are built up systematically so that many students are able to travel by public transport independently to Leicester city centre in a relatively short space of time.

- Information about students' progress and their work in books shows that they are making excellent progress towards their targets and examination courses doing much better than expected.

- Teachers have the highest expectations and aspirations for their students and ensure each student is provided with an individual programme of activities to prepare them well for adult life and the next stage of their education. Teachers have developed an exceptional curriculum consisting of the core subjects of English and mathematics, with a wide range of vocational subjects to choose from and a full programme of careers education, work related learning including work experience and excellent opportunities for developing independence skills. This enables students to make realistic choices about their futures when they leave the sixth form.

- The newly developed provision is extremely popular with parents and students. The outstanding vocational provision has also been recognised by mainstream schools, which are enabling some of their students to benefit from these programmes.

Outcomes for residential pupils	are good
Quality of residential provision and care	is good
Residential pupils' safety	is good
Leadership and management of the residential provision	are good

- Residential provision is good in all areas and has a significant impact of pupils' learning and well-being. There have been no failures of national minimum standards. Residential students develop strong relationships with staff. They choose to stay in residence and thoroughly enjoy the experience. 100% of parents the inspectors spoke to agreed they would recommend this school to other parents.
- The voice of each student is highly valued. Residential students are encouraged to make decisions and choices. The school has student governors and student development teams, of which one team focuses on the development of residence. This promotes student's good personal development provide a platform for students to be fully involved in the future development of residential provision.
- Students' learning in residence is good. There is a strong focus on promoting independence from teaching independent travel and budgeting skills to making their own bed and ensuring good personal hygiene. New and established independence skills are practised throughout their stays in the residential provision, which enables them to successfully become mature citizens.
- Residential students thoroughly enjoy the activities offered in the residential accommodation. They actively engage in art, sports, board games and cycling to mention just a few. They also engage enthusiastically with their homework session where they are ably supported by care and academic staff. Some students are offered extra tuition which is taken up, without protest, during residential time. This enhances their learning well. Residential students tend to sleep well in residence due to their active evenings which ensures better engagement with their studies during the day.

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>

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

School details

Unique reference number	120348
Social care unique reference number	SC001836
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	449457

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	151
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	27
Number of boarders on roll	24
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Ivens
Headteacher	Jason Brooks
Date of previous school inspection	21 March 2012
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