

# Maidenhall Primary School

Newark Road, Luton, LU4 8LD

**Inspection dates** 3–4 March 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Since the current leadership team was appointed, it has made considerable improvements to the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and their behaviour. All aspects of the school's work are now good and continuing to improve.
- The interim executive board has had a strong impact on raising aspirations for both teachers and pupils. It has made a strong contribution to the school's ongoing improvements.
- Pupils behave well. They are welcoming, polite and courteous. They work hard and try their best.
- Pupils are safe and know how to keep themselves safe in different situations.
- Teaching is now good throughout the school. Planned activities engage pupils' interest well, motivating them to learn with enthusiasm and make good progress.
- Achievement is good and improving. Across the school, all groups of pupils are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the early years are well taught and make good progress.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They learn about and respect people from backgrounds different to their own.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always ask questions effectively to probe pupils' understanding or encourage them to think more deeply about what they are learning.
- Occasionally, teachers do not give pupils clear enough guidance on how to improve their work.
- The most-able pupils are sometimes given work that is too easy.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their mathematical skills and solve practical problems.
- In the early years, the learning area outdoors is not as stimulating as it is indoors.
- A few pupils are absent from school for extended periods of time. This is detrimental to their learning and slows their progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 32 lessons. Some of these observations were carried out jointly with two of the assistant headteachers. Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons and looked closely at the work in their books.
- Inspectors met three groups of pupils and spoke informally to other pupils in lessons and during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with leaders, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and two other members, as well as a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school. They examined documents including those concerning pupils' achievement and progress, development plans and information about teachers' performance. They also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding, and considered the minutes of interim executive board meetings.
- Inspectors considered the 12 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also spoke to parents at the start of the school day and the lead inspector had a telephone conversation with another parent. Inspectors considered the 62 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

David Radomsky, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Charlotte Wood	Additional Inspector
Ann McCarthy	Additional Inspector
Vreta Bagilhole	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Maidenhall Primary School is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium (the additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care) is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average. The large majority of pupils are from Pakistani heritage, although a significant number come from Bangladeshi backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The early years provision comprises three Reception classes for four-year-olds, who all attend full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection there has been a large turnover of staff. The entire senior leadership team has joined since then, some members within the last year. New achievement leader roles, with responsibility for year groups, were established in September 2014. Since then an interim executive board has taken responsibility for governance. At the time of the inspection the headteacher was absent owing to long-term sickness leave, and the school was being led by two of the assistant headteachers.

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

- Raise achievement further by ensuring that:
  - teachers ask questions that check pupils' understanding and encourage them to think more deeply about their learning
  - pupils understand clearly how to improve their work
  - all groups of pupils, especially the most able, are given work in lessons that challenges them to make rapid progress
  - pupils have more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to solve practical problems.
- Improve early years provision by further developing the outdoor area so it fully supports learning.
- Raise attendance by working more closely with parents to help them understand the detrimental effect of long-term absence on their children's learning and progress, so that family trips are only booked in school holidays.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- All of the school's leaders share a passion and commitment to making sure that pupils achieve the highest standards of which they are capable and become confident, caring and responsible citizens. They have raised the quality of teaching considerably and transformed the school into a harmonious community in which pupils behave well and all can thrive academically. No discrimination is tolerated.
- Leaders have had an uncompromising focus on strengthening the quality of teaching. All teachers benefit from high quality training, coaching and sharing of best practice. Leaders check the quality of teaching frequently. The individual targets set for improving teachers' effectiveness and are based on measurable criteria linked to pupils' achievement. As a result, all pupils make good or better progress.
- Leaders make sure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed in their learning. Any pupil who falls behind receives extra support to help them to catch up. Leaders also ensure that all pupils are able to participate in everything the school has to offer.
- The new achievement leaders have made a good start. They lead their year teams well to plan inspiring learning activities in all subjects and to share best practice. In addition, these leaders frequently check the work in pupils' books, observe their colleagues teaching and offer them good developmental feedback on how to improve. They are enhancing their skills through a leadership training programme.
- The school has used the pupil premium well to fund additional teaching support as well as programmes to support eligible pupils' personal well-being, such as enabling participation in a drama club to help boost self-confidence. This is having a positive impact in ensuring that any attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are closing.
- Leaders have used the primary school physical education and sport funding extremely well. Teachers benefit from expert coaching and opportunities to observe specialists at work and so improve their effectiveness in teaching physical education. In the past, pupils had very few opportunities to participate in sports clubs. Now there are 17 clubs on offer with a high participation rate. The school also enters pupils for a range of inter-school tournaments. Consequently, pupils are developing their health and well-being.
- Pupils study a wide range of topics and enjoy memorable experiences, such as visiting a farm during the lambing season or having a visiting theatre to perform the Shakespearean plays that older pupils are studying. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Assemblies that reinforce the half-termly values such as 'responsibility', visits to other schools with pupils of different ethnic backgrounds and faiths, and the school's annual faith day promote tolerance and respect for individuals from all walks of life. Pupils are therefore well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet all statutory requirements. All staff have recently attended child protection training, including on the 'Prevent' strategy that deals with potential extremism and radicalisation. All policies and procedures have been reviewed recently to ensure they are effective and all pupils and staff are safe.
- The local authority's highly effective support for leaders and teachers has made a strong contribution to the improvements made since the time of the previous inspection.
- Leaders actively endeavour to engage and involve parents in their children's learning. Parents have many opportunities to come into school and work alongside their children. Leaders and teachers run workshops to share with parents how their children are being taught and to give them the resources to support their children's learning at home. Family support workers provide many other opportunities for parents to attend adult education classes so that they can improve their own skills, especially in English. They also run after-school reading and homework clubs for pupils whose parents find it difficult to support their children owing to language barriers, so that they too can make good progress.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- The members of the interim executive board bring a wealth of experience and relevant expertise to the school. They scrutinise in depth all aspects of the school's work and seek external verification and validation, for example on the quality of teachers' performance and their assessment of pupils' progress.
- Members of the board analyse information about pupils' attainment and progress frequently, including that relating to disadvantaged pupils. They therefore have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They offer both strong support and challenge to the headteacher and other leaders and have made a significant contribution to improving standards this academic year.
- The board checks the school's spending decisions closely and ensures that staff pay is justified by teaching performance and the pupils' results. Members of the board ensure that senior leaders give good support to any underperforming staff so that they can improve quickly. Leaders are required to take other appropriate action should the support prove to be ineffective. The board is endeavouring to recruit a shadow governing body to ensure that a future handover of powers to a full governing body is successful and well timed.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are very welcoming to visitors. They are helpful and polite, readily opening doors for visitors such as the inspectors. Pupils respect their peers and adults alike and all get on well with each other.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They want to do well and enthusiastically ask and answer questions. They take great care in the presentation of their work, which is neat and tidy. On the odd occasion, some pupils lose concentration or interest. However, if they start to interrupt the learning of other pupils, teachers use the new behaviour management systems well and quickly focus the pupils back on what they should be learning about.
- Pupils wear their uniform with pride. They take good care of the school's facilities and put their litter in the bins. They walk around the corridors sensibly and eat their lunch in a mature manner.
- Pupils relish the opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as being prefects and helping out in the playground and corridors during break and lunch times. They appreciate the principles of democracy as they elect members of the school council who meet weekly and make suggestions on how to improve the school. For example, the school council carried out research and found that the school was wasting three times more paper than any other school in Luton. They therefore made proposals on how the school could become more eco-friendly by trying to substantially cut the use of paper.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe. They are confident that, if they have any worries or concerns, they can approach an adult and their concerns will be taken seriously.
- Pupils are aware of the various types of bullying. They say that it rarely occurs, but when it does it is dealt with appropriately and efficiently.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in various situations. They are well aware, for example, of the dangers of social networking sites on the internet. Visits from the police and fire-fighters, for instance, help pupils to appreciate other potential risks and how to keep themselves safe.
- Rates of attendance are increasing but overall they remain below the national average for primary schools. The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly. Each year, however, despite not being authorised by the school, a very small number of parents take their children on extended overseas visits. These long absences have a detrimental impact on pupils' learning and progress.

**The quality of teaching** is good

- Teaching is good in different subjects and age groups, and improving at a good rate. This is enabling pupils to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups. This was confirmed by observations and checking of books during the inspection, information about pupils' current progress and the assessments of teaching carried out by the school's leaders and local authority consultants.
- Staff use displays in the classroom very well to celebrate pupils' achievements and demonstrate the richness of the curriculum. The wall displays provide good frames of reference to help pupils extend their literacy and numeracy skills well. Each class has its own library and reading area, which encourages pupils to read for pleasure. This creates a very positive climate for learning.
- The staff teach reading well. They are well trained in the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make). This is ensuring that from the Reception Year onwards children develop an interest in reading for pleasure and for finding out information. Pupils are encouraged to read at home and are given ample opportunities to read in school; they make good use of the school library. This year, teachers have been ensuring that pupils have well planned opportunities to develop further their comprehension and inference skills.
- Writing is also taught effectively. Teachers help pupils to understand how sentences are structured and give them many models of good writing and vocabulary to learn from. Pupils have many opportunities to write across different subjects and for a variety of audiences and purposes. This ensures that pupils become competent writers.
- Leaders have provided good training to staff to help them further improve their teaching of mathematics. This is ensuring that any gaps in pupils' basic skills are being addressed and that pupils are now making good progress. Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to apply their skills and solve everyday practical problems in other subjects to promote more rapid progress.
- Teachers work closely with teaching assistants to plan imaginative and engaging learning activities suitable for pupils of differing abilities. On the odd occasion, the most-able pupils initially do work which is too easy for them before they are expected to try more challenging tasks. This is a barrier preventing them from making outstanding progress.
- Teachers usually ask pupils well-chosen questions to ascertain their level of understanding. Occasionally, these questions are not sufficiently probing to enable staff to help pupils to think more deeply about what they are learning.
- All teachers mark pupils' work frequently and in accordance with the school's policy. Pupils therefore always know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. From time to time, though, pupils are not sure how to improve their work when their teachers' guidance does not clearly help them to understand their initial misconception.

**The achievement of pupils** is good

- Pupils' achievement has improved significantly over the last year. In 2014, Year 2 pupils had made good progress from low starting points to reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This was a marked improvement on previous years, and similar gains are now being seen in Years 3 to 6. All groups of pupils are now achieving well, and progress is continuing to increase at a good rate.
- Published data show that standards at the end of Year 6 in 2014 were lower than the previous year, especially in reading and mathematics. This was the result of a legacy of weak teaching in some year groups. Within the year, however, they made very good progress overall. The school's data and pupils' work show that current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach average standards. Given their low standards at the beginning of Key Stage 2, this represents good or better progress.
- In the 2014 Year 1 phonics screening, an average proportion of pupils reached the expected standard.

- There is no discernible variation in the achievement of pupils from different minority ethnic groups or for those who speak English as an additional language. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs now achieve equally well. This is because they receive well-chosen support from their skilled teachers and teaching assistants.
- The most-able pupils make good progress overall. This is because teachers usually plan activities that are suitably challenging to help them make good progress. When leaders check every pupil's progress, they also arrange additional support for any of the most-able pupils who are not on track to reach their academic potential. There is, for instance, a booster group now for some of the most-able Year 6 mathematicians to help them reach a Level 6 in the end of year tests. The most-able pupils do not routinely make outstanding progress because occasionally they do work that is too easy.
- In 2014, at the end of Year 6, disadvantaged pupils reached similar standards to their classmates but were about one year behind other pupils nationally in reading. In writing, they were about four months behind their classmates and five months behind other pupils nationally. In mathematics, they were six months behind their peers and 17 months behind other pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making good progress, often faster than their peers, and this is helping to close the gaps.

### The early years provision

is good

- Many children join Reception with skills that are significantly below those typical for their age, especially in their social development and in communication and language. They make good progress in all areas of learning because they are taught well. The proportion of children leaving the early years with a good level of development is increasing, and although standards remain below average they are well prepared for entry into Year 1.
- Leadership and management are effective. Accurate self-evaluation and improvement planning ensure that all aspects of the early years provision are good. Leaders encourage parents to support their children's learning through regular workshops and opportunities to stay and learn with their children.
- Teachers and other adults work alongside children effectively, helping them to develop their ideas and follow their interests. They use many opportunities to engage them in dialogue to develop their understanding of English and help them to extend their vocabulary quickly. Planned activities for writing provide opportunities for children to apply their phonics knowledge well by writing for different purposes.
- Children's behaviour is good, both inside and outdoors. They learn rapidly to follow rules and routines, and concentrate sensibly on their tasks. Children's willingness to share demonstrates how well staff have established high expectations and good routines to keep children safe.
- The classrooms provide children with a very vibrant learning environment. Resources are easily accessible to the children and are well chosen to stimulate interest. They contribute well to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, such as in encouraging imagination in the role-play areas. In the outdoor areas children can develop their physical skills well through, for example, using the climbing frames. Activities outdoors, however, do not promote other areas of learning as well as those indoors, especially in terms of language and mathematical 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>	109546
<b>Local authority</b>	Luton
<b>Inspection number</b>	441981

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	624
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Interim executive board
<b>Chair</b>	Craig Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Yasmine Dhillon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 March 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 430780
<b>Fax number</b>	N/a
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