

# Inspection of Maple Primary School

Hall Place Gardens, Maple Primary School, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 3SW

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Inspection dates: 13 and 14 October 2021

## Overall effectiveness

**Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 15 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time. From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Maple Primary School is a culturally rich and diverse community. Pupils come from many different backgrounds and home languages are celebrated. Pupils feel special and they value each person and their uniqueness. Pupils have a mature understanding of difference. Deaf children from the specially resourced provision for special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) integrate into school exceptionally well. New pupils who come from overseas settle in very quickly.

Pupils enjoy their learning and want to do well. They are seldom absent. Pupils want to take part in all the many and varied extra opportunities they have in order to develop and pursue their interests. Animation workshops, street dance sessions and chess are a few of the examples of the popular activities that are open to everyone.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They play calmly together during social times. Pupils know that unkindness towards each other is not tolerated. They trust adults to resolve matters quickly if issues such as bullying occur. Parents are supportive of the school. Most parents who responded to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, would recommend the school.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The interim headteacher is steering the school well through a period of change. During the pandemic, leaders focused on improving the curriculum so that it is ambitious in all subjects. There are a few new leaders who have not yet checked the implementation of their reviewed curriculum plans.

Subject leaders' curriculum plans set out what pupils will learn and when they will gain new knowledge. Teachers also make sure that pupils learn the important vocabulary they need. Teachers revisit what they have taught to help pupils learn it well. Pupils talk confidently about complex ideas such as explaining variables and algorithms from their learning in computing.

This strength in curriculum planning is not fully the case across all subjects. In some subject plans, it is not clear when teachers will revisit knowledge which pupils need to remember. As a result, pupils do not learn as well.

Children in the Reception class make a good start to their education. Staff check children's starting points and adapt the curriculum. For example, adults include more physical development activities to help children develop fine motor skills. Leaders are reviewing the curriculum to strengthen links with the delivery of the foundation subjects in later years. An example is where staff have started a new early years art curriculum to provide a better foundation for learning art in older years.

Staff help children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 to learn to read quickly and well. Many pupils in Year 2 are already reading demanding and

enjoyable books fluently and confidently. The reading curriculum is well planned and delivered. Books closely match pupils' reading abilities. Teachers and support staff receive regular training. They know the best methods that will work for an individual, whether a pupil speaks English as an additional language or whether a pupil has SEND to help them keep up. Staff quickly identify and address misunderstandings. Due to the excellent support that deaf pupils receive, they achieve as well as other pupils.

Leaders and governors have prioritised the improvement of provision for pupils with SEND who are not in the specially resourced provision. They have made sure that the new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has the time and resources to improve this aspect of the school's work. As a result, staff support pupils with SEND well. Staff involve parents early on with the identification of pupils' needs. Teachers carefully follow pupils' support plans so that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their peers. They regularly review the support that pupils receive and are responsive to pupils' changing needs. This ensures that pupils with SEND are successful in their learning and with gaining independence.

Pupils behave well. Children in the Reception class have quickly learned and willingly follow the routines of the classroom. They happily share items and take turns using play equipment. Older pupils move calmly around school and settle quickly into lessons. On the odd occasion when there is any low-level disruption, pupils are confident that it will be quickly dealt with.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand the safeguarding issues their pupils may face. They are vigilant, for example checking on pupils' safety when using taxi services to get to and from school. Staff receive regular briefings about the latest government guidance. Their training is up to date. Leaders work well with external agencies to ensure that all services are well informed about the most vulnerable pupils. They make sure that these pupils get the support they need.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, for example when working online.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Opportunities for pupils to revisit and practise using important knowledge is not as well developed in a few subjects. Where this is the case, pupils do not recall their learning as well and do not know and understand key subject vocabulary as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that the revisiting of important knowledge, including the use of subject vocabulary, is consistently planned and delivered across subjects.

- Parts of the early years curriculum are new. They do not link as clearly as they could to what pupils will learn when they reach Year 1. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is designed so that pupils are fully prepared for what they will need to learn in key stage 1.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117298
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199332
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	249
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Nicola Wong
<b>Headteacher</b>	Shanti Johnson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.maple.herts.sch.uk">www.maple.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 December 2006

## Information about this school

- The interim headteacher was appointed in April 2021 and is in post for the rest of the academic year.
- An experienced governor of the school has recently started the role of chair of governors.
- The school is diverse. There are 37 languages spoken at the school.
- The school has specially resourced provision for 10 deaf pupils.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors spoke with a representative from the local authority, governors, leaders, staff and pupils about the school's provision.

- Inspectors spoke with parents when they came to drop off their children before the start of school.
- Inspectors observed pupil's behaviour in lessons and how they conducted themselves around the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science and art to evaluate the quality of education at the school. Inspectors spoke to senior leaders and subject leaders about the curriculum. Inspectors spoke to teachers and pupils. They looked at pupils' work. They also looked at the curriculum plans for other foundation subjects and spoke with pupils about their learning in a range of other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors spoke with pupils about how they are taught to stay safe. They spoke with staff and leaders about safeguarding. They looked at the school's policies, procedures and records.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, such as school development plans, the school's self-evaluation summary, records of governing body meetings, and information published on the school's website.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views when talking to them in groups.
- Inspectors considered the 29 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff and the 74 responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils.
- Inspectors took into account the 79 responses to Ofsted Parent View and read the 51 free-text comments.

## Inspection team

Liz Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kristian Hewitt

Her Majesty's Inspector

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