

Inspection of Maple Cross Junior Mixed Infant and Nursery School

Denham Way, Maple Cross, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 9SS

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 July 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Maple Cross enjoy learning. They understand and live up to the school's values to 'reflect, lead and aspire'. Pupils behave well in lessons and during playtimes. Pupils enjoy school as it is a calm and kind place to be. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. This includes when they are online. Bullying does not happen often. If it does, staff help pupils to deal with it. As a result, pupils feel safe.

Pupils enjoy and appreciate the wide range of opportunities they have at school. They talk with enthusiasm about trips to places like The Science Museum, London or watching the ballet, and how this helps them learn more. Pupils enjoy learning about people who are different from them. They talk openly and articulately about what they learn from this. Older pupils enjoy their positions of responsibility. They especially enjoy the many chances they get to help younger children as buddies and sports leaders.

Pupils work hard to meet the high expectations leaders have of them. They learn well and talk about their work with pride. Pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their education.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum which clearly sets out what they want children to learn. Leaders have provided staff with appropriate training to enable them to deliver this curriculum well. As a result, pupils have a secure understanding of the important knowledge leaders have identified that they want them to learn. This includes in the early years.

Staff receive regular training on the teaching of phonics and early reading. Staff teach the school's phonics scheme effectively. Children in the early years are taught phonics as soon as they start school. Pupils who need extra help are well supported by well-trained adults. Pupils' reading books are closely aligned to the sounds they know and can decode. Pupils, as they get older, continue to receive high-quality support to develop their fluency and confidence to read more-complex materials.

Leaders prioritise reading and vocabulary across all subjects. Regular staff training sessions support staff to teach vocabulary precisely to pupils. For example, in Spanish, teachers' precise delivery of new language means that pupils can recall and pronounce Spanish vocabulary accurately and confidently.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn well across the curriculum. The majority of pupils' specific needs are precisely identified, and additional support further meets these needs. However, there are occasions where additional support is not targeted as precisely as it should be. This means that for some pupils with SEND do not access learning as effectively as they should.

Leaders have high expectations for how pupils behave. These expectations are set as soon as children start in the early years. Children in the early years are taught routines and self-regulation. Leaders provide comprehensive training on the school's approach to behaviour to all staff. Staff are consistent in how they manage behaviour. Leaders have worked hard to improve attendance. Whilst they have seen some improvements, these have not been as quick as they would like. As a result, a significant minority of pupils are persistently absent from school.

Leaders offer a range of opportunities for pupils' wider personal development. Pupils, including the youngest children, enjoy learning and understand about healthy food, hygiene and exercise. Leaders carefully plan trips to enhance pupils' learning and aspirations. The curriculum has been carefully planned to teach pupils to value the differences between people. Trips to places of worship and visitors to the school further develop pupils' knowledge about a wide range of faiths and beliefs. This is further enhanced through a range of diverse literature. Pupils have respectful relationships with each other and adults.

Leaders work hard to engage parents and carers. The ambitious curriculum that leaders have designed is typically well implemented. However, there are some subjects where the curriculum is not taught how leaders have planned. Leadership monitoring in these subjects is less well developed. Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge which leaders have not identified.

Governors hold leaders to account through regular monitoring. They know the strengths and areas for development of the school. Governors work effectively with leaders to ensure that staff are supported with their workload and well-being. Staff, at all levels, feel their well-being is a priority of leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is a priority for everyone. They ensure relevant background checks are completed on all adults at the school. Regular and relevant training means staff know how to keep pupils safe. Leaders ensure this training is understood by staff by routinely checking their understanding of safeguarding as part of their monitoring. Leaders are tenacious in all areas of safeguarding.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe. This includes when they are online. Pupils know who to talk to if they have any worries. They are confident staff will support them with any concerns they have.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not routinely monitor all areas of the curriculum with the same level of rigour. Parts of the curriculum are not always implemented in the way leaders

have planned. Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge that leaders have not identified. Leaders should accurately monitor the implantation of the whole curriculum to the same high standard, so that pupils learn all the intended knowledge effectively.

- The curriculum that leaders have designed is helping most pupils with SEND to learn well. Sometimes the additional support that staff put in place for pupils with SEND lacks precision. Some pupils do not receive precise-enough support. Leaders must ensure staff have the subject knowledge to support all pupils with SEND so they can learn as effectively as they should.
- While there have been some improvements, a significant minority of pupils are persistently absent from school. Leaders should review and implement more effective approaches to promote good attendance, so that these pupils attend school regularly.

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

Unique reference number	117266
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10226961
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	162
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Elizabeth Maykels
Headteacher	Hannah Trickett
Website	www.maplecross.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Maple Cross Junior Mixed Infant and Nursery School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- There is an on-site breakfast and after-school club for pupils, run by an external provider.

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 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and Spanish. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some

pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.

- Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding policies, the school's record of background checks of adults at the school and a sample of child protection files. Inspectors also spoke with governors, leaders and staff about safeguarding practices at the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, assistant headteacher and acting inclusion coordinator, subject leaders, staff and pupils. They also met the chair and vice-chair of governors and an adviser from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, attendance records, minutes of governing body meetings, SEND records, governor and local authority visit notes, school development plans and school policies.
- There were 36 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, that were considered by inspectors, alongside 26 free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke to a number of parents to gather their views.
- There were no responses to the staff or pupil surveys. Inspectors spoke to staff and pupils throughout the inspection to gather their views.

Inspection team

Michael Williams, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Daniel Short

Her Majesty's Inspector

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