

Inspection of a good school: Mapledene Primary School

Mapledene Road, Birmingham, West Midlands B26 3XE

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 November 2022

Outcome

Mapledene Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at Mapledene Primary School. They say it is like being part of a family. Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. Pupils achieve well because leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious for them all, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders ensure that pupils follow the school rules. All pupils behave well. Leaders deal with bullying effectively.

Pupils understand about equality and diversity. They visit different places of worship. This broadens their understanding of life in modern Britain. Pupils talk about the things they learn on these trips respectfully. Visitors such as meteorologists and dentists help pupils learn about science and keeping healthy. These visitors encourage pupils to have high career aspirations.

Pupils have opportunities to develop their character through trips, visits and clubs, such as dance and drumming. Pupils sing enthusiastically in the choir. They perform songs at a local hospital. These opportunities ensure that pupils are equipped to be ready to move on through education and life. Pupils take on responsibilities, such as being librarians and reading to younger pupils. Children in Reception take turns to be milk and fruit monitors. They are proud of these roles that contribute to the life of the school.

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

In most subjects, the knowledge that pupils need to know is precisely organised. Teachers are clear about what children need to learn. Pupils benefit from a variety of approaches to reinforce the learning. For example, in mathematics, teachers refer back to previous work to make sure that pupils remember what they have been taught. This helps pupils to apply what they have learned to solve new mathematical problems. In the early years, leaders also identify the important knowledge that pupils need to know in detail. For example, children in both Nursery and Reception use play dough to make characters from

stories they hear. In Reception, teachers expect the children to make a more complex item using equipment and additional resources. This ensures that children's learning builds over time.

However, pupils do not learn as well as they should in a small number of subjects. Leaders have not ensured that the detailed knowledge that pupils need to know has been clearly identified. This means that teachers are sometimes unsure about what knowledge they need to teach and when to teach it. In some subjects, teachers focus on creating memorable activities rather than emphasising the learning. This means that some pupils can remember the activity but not what they learned as a result.

Teachers identify pupils with SEND effectively. Leaders ensure that these pupils receive the support they need from well-trained staff. As a result, pupils with SEND, including those with speech, language and communication needs, make progress against their specific targets.

The provision for reading is very effective. The way pupils learn sounds is well organised. Most pupils learn to read fluently. All children start learning to read as soon as they join in Reception. Pupils receive support from well-trained staff if they need extra help. This means that they catch up quickly. Staff make sure that pupils have reading books that match the sounds they are learning.

Pupils are proud of their work but too many children cannot write in a fluent handwriting style. Teachers do not consistently address children's ineffective pencil grip when learning to form letters. Mistakes persist and become embedded in pupils' practice. This means that they are not able to write as fluently as they should when they get older.

The school's governing body has seen significant changes recently. Many of the governors are new to their roles and, as yet, have not acquired the skills needed to enable them to check the impact of leaders' actions and offer challenge when required.

Staff say that leaders take their workload and well-being into consideration at all times. Teachers say that this gives them more time to focus on teaching. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They say their children are happy, safe and nurtured.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide regular training for staff and governors. Staff know how to spot pupils who may be at risk of harm and know what to do if they have concerns. They pass on concerns promptly. Leaders and staff support pupils' welfare. They work well with parents and external agencies to provide additional help when needed.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum teaches pupils how to stay safe. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, appropriate boundaries and behaviour. They know how to keep

themselves safe when online. Pupils know whom to talk to in school if they are worried. They are confident that staff listen.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that the precise knowledge that pupils need to learn is well thought out in some subjects. Teachers are sometimes unsure about what key knowledge they need to teach. Pupils cannot remember important information to help them understand new learning. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is well sequenced and that the most important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember is clear.
- Support for early handwriting is not as effective as it could be. As a result, pupils do not write with fluent handwriting. Leaders should ensure that teachers support pupils to develop correct pencil grip and address pupils' errors with letter formation.
- Some governors are inexperienced and lack a secure understanding of their roles. This prevents them from being able to offer appropriate challenge and to check fully the impact of leaders' actions. Governors should ensure that they develop their skills so that they can make effective checks on leaders' actions.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2017.

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.

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	134094
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10226926
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	334
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Hobday
Headteacher	Jacqueline Stephenson
Website	http://www.mapledene.bham.sch.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 March 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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 held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. They met representatives of the governing body.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For the deep dives, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work from other subjects.
- The lead inspector met with the designated lead for safeguarding to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record.

- The inspectors spoke with groups of staff and took account of views shared through the staff survey.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 read to a familiar adult. During the inspection, the inspectors met with groups of pupils both formally and during less structured parts of the day.
- The inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the pupils' survey. The lead inspector spoke informally with parents on arrival at school.
- Inspectors met with the leaders responsible for the early years, pupils with SEND, behaviour and personal development.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans, records of governance and documentation relating to pupils' behaviour.

Inspection team

Corinne Biddell, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Anna Vrahimi

His Majesty's Inspector

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 and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022