

Inspection of Maplewell Hall School

Maplewell Road, Woodhouse Eaves, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE12 8QY

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this exceptional school. For many, their life chances are transformed by the quality of care and education they receive. Staff are very aspirational for what pupils can achieve. Pupils rise to this challenge admirably.

Highly positive relationships between pupils and staff are a real mark of the school. In all lessons and activities, pupils happily complete their work. Staff encourage pupils to persevere and complete challenging activities. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are impressive. If pupils occasionally struggle to regulate their behaviour, staff step in quickly to provide skilled support. However, such instances are rare.

Parents and carers are full of praise for the school. Many say that the staff are friendly and approachable. Parents feel reassured that staff know their children very well, saying, for example, 'Nothing is too much trouble.'

Similarly, pupils express positive views about the school. They say that they feel safe. They appreciate friendships, 'fun' lessons and the many extra activities and residential trips. School does not end when the taxis arrive. There is a range of popular clubs, activities and tuition available at lunchtimes and after school. This ensures that pupils can develop their talents and interests beyond the academic.

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

Leaders and staff are highly ambitious for every pupil to achieve their full potential, regardless of their additional needs. They know the pupils, and their needs, very well. Leaders use this precise knowledge to provide a personalised and ambitious curriculum. The aim is for all pupils to develop secure knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects. Beyond the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, leaders carefully consider pupils' interests alongside staff specialisms. Pupils in key stage 4 can select from a wide range of options. The school's published outcomes have improved significantly over time. Pupils are increasingly successful in gaining academic and vocational qualifications as well as skills to become more independent.

Leaders place the utmost importance on reading. They recognise reading as a key skill for life and a gateway to access the whole curriculum. Staff quickly assess pupils' reading ability as soon as they join the school. They provide individual support for any pupils who need it. Pupils read books that match their reading ability. They are justifiably proud of their reading achievements.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge across all areas of the curriculum. In lessons, teachers provide activities that enable pupils to recall and apply what they already know. Instructions are clear and straightforward. Teachers constantly check pupils' learning. They pick up on any misunderstandings straightaway. Pupils are confident learners. They ask questions and take part in discussions. Pupils take pride in their written work.

Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils in the Maplewell Autism Provision (MAP) has increased considerably, due to high demand. The MAP is now a significant strength of the school. It has gained external recognition and accreditation. Leaders ensure that the teaching is highly personalised to pupils' specific needs. Consequently, MAP pupils integrate successfully into the main school for their key stage 4 options.

From the moment pupils join the school, leaders and staff focus strongly on preparing them for their next steps, employability and adulthood. The school's preparation for adulthood (P4A) curriculum is a prominent feature of the provision. Many pupils spoke thoughtfully about their plans for the future. Some pupils have high aspirations, such as in engineering, animal care or floristry. Staff guide pupils towards courses that will support them to achieve their ambitions. Leaders have explored the employment possibilities in the local area. They have formed positive partnerships with local businesses. Such links provide workplace opportunities for pupils.

Students in the post-16 provision also receive an exceptional quality of education. They can follow one of three pathways: college-ready, work-ready or life-ready. Each pathway involves an ambitious curriculum that sets no limits on pupils' achievements.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn to respect and value cultural diversity. Pupils understand the importance of treating everyone equally. For example, they can talk meaningfully about democracy and current affairs. The school has recently gained an external award in recognition of its work on inclusion and supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils.

Leaders and governors engage with staff effectively. They are keen to ensure that staff do not experience undue pressure due to workload demands. Staff speak warmly about the care shown by leaders for their mental health and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that all staff adopt a rigorous approach to safeguarding. Leaders ensure that staff training is up to date. Records are detailed and clearly demonstrate leaders' prompt response to any concerns that arise. Everyone knows the pupils very well. Staff in all areas of the school have a constant focus on pupils' safety and well-being, due to pupils' additional vulnerabilities.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through the P4A curriculum. They learn about substance misuse and online safety. Pupils discuss the importance of healthy relationships and learn about the meaning of consent.

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	120348
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10254789
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	294
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kaisra Khan
Headteacher	Jason Brooks
Website	www.maplewell.leics.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 and 11 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorder, and a range of social, emotional and mental health difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The MAP is situated on the main school site. This provision caters for pupils who perform academically broadly in line with age-related expectations and for whom autism spectrum disorder is their primary need. At the time of the inspection, there were 61 pupils in the MAP, from Years 7 to 11.
- Since the previous inspection, the sixth-form provision has moved to the Maplewell post-16 provision, situated a short distance away in Loughborough.
- The school currently uses one alternative provider, Melton Hub.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior and curriculum leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and several members of the governing body. The lead inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, religious education, science and the school's MAP for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. An inspector visited the school's off-site, post-16 provision.
- For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and reviewed curriculum planning and samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around the school.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing the school's records, including pre-employment checks, and holding discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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