

Inspection of a good school: Maple Tree Primary School

Hawk Drive, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2WA

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 September 2023

Outcome

Maple Tree Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Maple Tree is a happy, inclusive school. Pupils say that they are safe here. They value kindness and friendship highly, and demonstrate this in their welcome to visitors.

Pupils try hard to follow the school's golden rules of 'ready, respectful, safe'. Relationships throughout the school are warm and positive. Adults have high expectations, and pupils strive to meet these. They are proud of the work they produce and enjoy the rewards they get for their hard work. Pupils celebrate each other's achievements in the classroom and in a weekly celebration assembly.

Pupils behave very well inside and outside. This includes the youngest children. In the Reception class, children have learned the routines and expectations of school quickly. Pupils play harmoniously in the playground. They socialise happily in the dining room.

Extra-curricular activities enhance pupils' experiences at school. After-school or lunchtime clubs cater for a range of interests. These include numerous sports, as well as gardening, music, art and a science club. Pupils develop leadership skills through being sports leaders, playground buddies or eco-warriors. Members of the pupil parliament lead whole-school initiatives, such as fundraising activities or the successful anti-bullying project. The choir performs at school and in the local community, for example at the mayor's Christmas carol service.

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

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum. It starts in the early years and builds pupils' learning over time. For example, children in pre-school and the Reception class listen to stories set in the past, such as 'Coming to England' by Floella Benjamin. They learn about chronology by ordering events in their own lives. This prepares them for learning about history in key stages 1 and 2.

Leaders regularly review the curriculum to ensure it meets pupils' needs. Following a period of review, new curriculum plans were introduced in a small number of subjects, for example in history and geography. These plans are in the early stages of implementation but they are already having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

Curriculum leaders have highlighted the key vocabulary that pupils need for each subject. This is reinforced in lessons so that pupils learn to use it naturally. In mathematics, pupils routinely use mathematical terms, such as subitise and partition, and can explain their meanings.

Teachers present new learning clearly. Through effective questioning, they check pupils' understanding. Teachers adjust their plans if they notice any misconceptions. At the end of a unit of work, teachers use a variety of methods of assessment to gain an overview of how well pupils have learned the content.

In some subjects, this assessment information is not always passed on to curriculum leaders. As a result, the school does not have a complete picture of how well the curriculum is working in some subjects. The school is not able to make the adjustments needed to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge in these subjects.

Reading is a priority. Numerous initiatives, such as World Book Day, regular book fairs and reading volunteers, promote a love of reading. Children in pre-school develop an awareness of the sounds that make up words through listening to stories and rhymes. Daily phonics lessons start in the Reception class. Throughout the early years and key stage 1, pupils gradually acquire the knowledge and skills they need to become fluent readers. Reading lessons in key stage 2 build on these foundations. They develop fluency and equip older pupils with more advanced reading skills. Adults ensure that any pupils who struggle with reading get effective extra help.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are quickly identified. Support is put in place so that they can access the same learning as their peers. These pupils participate fully in school life, including taking on leadership responsibilities and attending extra-curricular clubs.

Adults make their expectations for behaviour clear. Their consistent approach means pupils understand these expectations well. Classrooms are calm spaces, where pupils listen attentively and where learning is prioritised. As a result, most pupils thrive and learn well.

The school's values underpin every aspect of school life. Staff regularly praise pupils for demonstrating a particular value, such as courtesy or cooperation. Pupils relish this positive attention. Pupils' understanding of difference is well developed. They know that everyone should be treated with tolerance and respect. Pupils actively participate in democracy when they elect their pupil parliament. They appreciate the need for rules, as they draw up their class charters.

The school and governors have worked together to create a caring school community, where everyone's well-being is valued. They are mindful of the need to manage staff's workload. Staff describe an open-door culture, where everyone supports each other.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school's plans for assessment and the way in which it is used to inform future teaching are still in development. This means that some curriculum leaders have an incomplete picture of how well pupils are learning and how effective the curriculum is in their subject areas. The school should prioritise the further development of its approach to assessment in these subjects, ensuring it is consistent, purposeful and does not unnecessarily add to teachers' workload.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2014.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	132236
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10288480
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andy King
Headteacher	Cath Bainbridge
Website	www.mapletreeprimaryschool.com
Date of previous inspection	8 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school has changed from a lower school, with one and a half forms of entry, to a primary school, with one form of entry per year.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- Wraparound care is provided before and after school. This is led and managed by school staff.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with a range of leaders, including senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and governors, including the chair of the governing

body. She held a telephone meeting with the school's local authority improvement partner.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. The inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector reviewed a range of school documentation and policies, including the school development plan and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspector reviewed the responses to Ofsted's pupil, parent and staff questionnaires. She also spoke with pupils, parents and staff to gather their views of the school.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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