



Maple Cross JMI School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117266
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280028
Inspection dates 12 January 2006 to 13 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Jackie Cousins LI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Denham Way
School category	Community		WD3 2SS
Age range of pupils	4 to 12		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01923773189
Number on roll	118	Fax number	01923711281
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Richard Struck
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mr. David Evans

Age group 4 to 12	Inspection dates 12 January 2006 - 13 January 2006	Inspection number 280028
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This smaller than average sized primary and nursery school is on the edge of Rickmansworth. Year groups vary between nine and twenty-two pupils. The number of pupils in the school are increasing.. Levels of free school meals are slightly below average. When the youngest pupils start school their levels of knowledge and understanding are below those expected for 3-year-olds. Overall the school has an average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Nine out of ten pupils are from White British families. A few pupils are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language. The school has recently experienced significant problems with teaching staff being away on long term sickness but is now more stable.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Maple Cross Junior Mixed Infant School and Nursery is a sound school. The inspection agrees with the judgements of the school. The headteacher's leadership is effective. The number of parents choosing the school is increasing because this is an improving school. Teachers and teaching assistants are committed and care well for pupils. Parents are effectively involved in helping their children to learn new skills. The pupils are given a good start in the nursery and reception classes because of effective teaching and leadership. Standards by the beginning of Year 1 are broadly average overall but are below average in writing. Standards of writing and problem solving remain below average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils work hard in lessons and behave well. Exciting activities are planned and pupils like special events such as literacy week. Most pupils enjoy school. Several pupils said that they really enjoyed the sport activities in school. Pupils' progress is tracked effectively in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Assessment activities are used satisfactorily. However, pupil targets are not always challenging enough. The inspection confirms the school's judgement that the improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. For example, standards in science and mathematics in Year 2 are higher than were found at the last inspection. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 2 and 6 meet expectations because of the good use of the ICT suite, interactive whiteboards and teachers' expertise. The school is in a good position to improve in the future because of the effective school development plan and strong leadership of the headteacher. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- continue to raise standards of writing throughout the school - improve and increase the pupils' understanding of how to solve problems - continuing to develop the use specific targets with pupils in Years 3 to 6 so that they are even clearer about what they need to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' standards and achievement are satisfactory. When pupils enter the school their levels of knowledge and understanding are below average in the key skills of writing, speech and communication. They get off to a good start in the nursery and reception classes and attain broadly average standards by the beginning of Year 1 in all areas of learning except writing. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6 from an average starting point. Standards in reading, mathematics and science are broadly average in Year 2 and in Year 6 tests. However, standards in writing are below average. The school has identified the need to improve pupils' standards in writing and has started to train teachers to develop these skills more effectively. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of pupils does not consistently use imaginative vocabulary in their writing or structure their work well. Pupils' abilities to solve

problems, particularly in mathematics are underdeveloped. This is because teachers do not give them enough opportunities to discuss a variety of strategies that they could use. Standards for boys and girls vary considerably from year to year with such small numbers in several year groups. The school did not meet challenging targets for Year 6 pupils last year but this was largely because of staff illness. School data demonstrates that pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve satisfactorily and those who speak English as an additional language make sound progress. Standards in ICT meet expectations in Years 2 and 6. For instance, many Year 6 pupils use computers effectively to create presentations, adding images and sound effectively. Some more able pupils know how to use formulae in spreadsheets well. The majority of pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress with regard to their specific targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. It is a happy and friendly school, welcoming all who come into it. They behave well and are very polite to visitors. Pupils say they are treated fairly, that adults will listen if they have a problem and help to sort them out. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning helps them enjoy school life. Attendance is average and most pupils arrive at school on time. Pupils understand how to lead safe and healthy lives because the school has an effective programme of study for personal, social and health education. For example, younger pupils are taught about road safety through practical activities and all pupils enjoy two physical education lessons each week. A strong emphasis on the teaching of reading, mathematics and ICT contributes satisfactorily to pupils' future economic well-being. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their successes are recognised through certificates awarded in assemblies and this raises their self-esteem. They know why rules are important and are clear about what the school expects of them. Working together in pairs and small groups helps them to learn to work together effectively. Pupils contribute to the life of the school by discussing their ideas with school council representatives, who effectively organised a competition to design a new school flag. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the wider community by raising money and collecting items for various charities. However, they are rarely involved in projects which make the local community a better place to live in

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with some good features. As a result, pupils make sound progress in learning basic skills. Teachers are enthusiastic about learning and so pupils are keen to work. They have good relationships with pupils and manage their classes effectively. Consequently, most pupils are polite to everyone around them. Resources are used well to capture pupils' interest. For example,

in a good English lesson in Year 2, the teacher used images from a film to get the pupils to describe different characters. This enabled pupils to use more exciting words in their writing. Teachers' planning has improved, especially in classes from nursery to Year 2. This means that the more able pupils are challenged effectively. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive a good level of support from teaching assistants. Teachers sometimes provide constructive feedback, which gives pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work. However, this good practice is not established in all classes. Some teachers do not use the time at the end of lessons to involve pupils in evaluating others' and their own work. This means they are not developing skills that will assist them to improve their own work. Assessment activities are good and are used satisfactorily. Pupils' achievement is tracked effectively in reading, writing, mathematics and science from the nursery to Year 6. However, not all pupil targets in Years 3 to 6 are really challenging. This means that pupils are not as clear as they could be about how to attain higher levels of attainment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school's curriculum is satisfactory and enables pupils to achieve satisfactorily in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT. The work pupils do is varied and enough time is given to all subjects. The school works carefully to ensure that pupils' days are interesting. For instance, creative sessions allow pupils to design and make puppets in Years 1 and 2 and effective provision for the arts includes the opportunity for all Year 3 and 4 pupils to learn the recorder and violin. They have many opportunities to sing and perform within the school in musical productions and activities. A satisfactory range of after school and lunch time clubs is enjoyed by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is good. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities are identified early and supported well. The school works closely with external agencies to ensure the needs of these pupils are met. Teachers and teaching assistants know all pupils well and work effectively to ensure pupils are safe and healthy. Procedures for child protection are in place. Pupils speak highly of their teachers and say that they feel well looked after. High quality support and care ensure that pupils remain enthusiastic about coming to school and are willing to learn. The school works effectively with parents. In most classes parents receive copies of pupil targets every term. Particularly good use of pupil targets in Years 1 and 2 means they are sent home targets every half term.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher leads the school well and is supported effectively by the two senior teachers. They work

successfully to create a supportive atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and welcome. Pupils from all backgrounds are effectively involved in school activities. There is a good team spirit among the staff and governors who are well motivated and want to do their best by the school. Views of the parents are sought and most show strong support for the school. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, including improved standards in mathematics and science in Key Stage 1 and ICT throughout the school. The senior leadership team and the governors have correctly identified what needs to improve. They know that pupils could do better in their writing and problem solving. The quality of self-evaluation is satisfactory. The school development plan is detailed and well focused but has yet to impact fully standards because recent staff absence has slowed the school's rate of improvement. The team is developing its ability to use data to track and improve the performance of individual pupils. An accurate evaluation of teaching has taken place. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and fair. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are well informed about the school's strengths and are supportive of the senior leadership team. However, not all governors are using the school development plan as well as they could be to hold the school to account for what it achieves. The strength in the leadership and management team, particularly the headteacher and senior teachers, gives the school good potential for future improvement.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for helping me find out about your school. I enjoyed watching lessons and talking to you. It was interesting to talk to your teachers and watch one assembly. Good things about your school include the fact that: -you work hard in lessons and behaviour is good - teachers and teaching assistants care for you well and help you to do good work - your headteacher and more senior teachers have good ideas about ways to improve the school -you are encouraged effectively to lead healthy and safe lives - the computer suite and interactive whiteboards are helping you to improve your ICT work. I have asked your school to look at how they can make things even better. I hope that you will help teachers by listening to them carefully. The most important things are: - keep improving your writing skills so that you write interesting pieces of work - to develop further your understanding of how to solve problems in mathematical work -help you to better understand the targets, which help you to improve your work. Keep up the super work at Maple Cross Junior Mixed Infant School and Nursery. Yours sincerely