

# Maidwell Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121845
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	292238
<b>Inspection date</b>	9 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ian Hodgkinson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	32
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cheryl Riseley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rosemarie James
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 June 2005
<b>School address</b>	Draughton Road Maidwell Northampton NN6 9JF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 686240
<b>Fax number</b>	01604 686394

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This very small school is set at the heart of a prosperous village in rural Northamptonshire. The school attracts pupils from much further afield than the village itself and half of its pupils are from outside its immediate catchment area. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. The skills demonstrated by children who join the school in their Reception Year vary very widely, but are broadly in line with those expected for their age. A high proportion of pupils join the school later than the Reception year, and a very high proportion leave before they reach the end of Year 6, mostly to secure places in the independent schools sector. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs varies year on year but is currently a little above average. No pupils, however, have a statement of special educational need. The school offers extended provision to pupils in the form of a breakfast club.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Maidwell is a good school which has made strong progress since its last inspection. Its pupils achieve well, and reach standards which are, overall, above average. Standards in writing, which were a key area for improvement in the last inspection, are now very high. The excellent progress pupils make in developing their writing skills comes from the exceptionally clear understanding they have about how to improve the quality of their written work. Pupils assess the standards of their work against the specific measures of success which are set out at the beginning of each writing task and also against their own individual targets for improvement. By giving pupils such clear and specific targets, teachers are able to ensure that, within classes of a wide range of age and ability, work is well matched to pupils' capabilities. The exemplary academic guidance offered to pupils in writing has yet to fully extend to mathematics, where achievement, whilst good for most pupils, is not as strong for all. Care, guidance and support for pupils are nonetheless good. The school's strong systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress ensure that staff intervene swiftly and effectively where pupils show a need for extra help.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. 'To this day', wrote one parent of a pupil in Year 1, 'my son has never been able to think of anything that made him sad, and always tells of things that make him happy or clever'. Pupils' immense enjoyment of school is reflected in their outstanding attendance records, and is secured by the good teaching and good curriculum they receive. Teachers use a very good range of activities and resources in lessons to engage pupils and ensure they learn well. Highly effective links have been made between subjects to ensure that pupils get many opportunities to apply and develop their reading, writing, number and computer skills to help solve problems in an interesting variety of situations. Their good development of basic skills and their ability to cooperate and work well together in completing tasks ensure that they are well prepared for later life. They are given a good start to their education in their Reception Year, where the careful assessment of their progress enables challenging activities to be planned to ensure that standards are high.

The school is well led and managed. It has been given exceptionally clear direction by the energetic leadership of the headteacher. There is a strong sense of teamwork among the staff, which helps to keep the quality of the school's provision under continual review. Very detailed information about pupils' progress also helps the school to develop a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The school's self-evaluation, however, does not prioritise specifically enough the main areas for improvement - currently in mathematics - indicated by its performance data. Governors have demonstrated exceptional strategic leadership in securing the school's viability during a period of instability in numbers on roll. Their efforts in marketing the school more widely and supporting the successful provision of extended services have been effective in ensuring that the school remains well resourced and offers good value for money. Given the school's good overall improvement, its outstanding improvement in writing, and its considerable strengths in leadership at all levels, it has an excellent capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement further in mathematics by following the school's excellent practice in writing by giving pupils clear guidance about how to improve.
- Identify the main priorities for improvement more specifically from the school's performance data to give a clear focus for school improvement planning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Overall, standards are above average. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), make good progress given their starting points, and achieve well. Standards vary widely between year groups, and standards in Years 4 to 6 are affected by high levels of mobility, particularly of those who leave the school. As a consequence, just one pupil has taken Year 6 national tests in each of the last two years, making it difficult to give meaningful comparisons with the national average. In most other year groups, representing the large majority of the school's population, standards are above average. Pupils reach the end of the Foundation Stage (Reception Year) with nearly all attaining or working beyond the standards expected for their age across all areas of their learning. Standards reached in tests at the end of Year 2 have risen strongly since the last inspection and were exceptionally high in 2006. Throughout the school, pupils make outstanding progress in writing, and whilst good for most, their progress in mathematics is not as strong for all pupils. In Year 5 in particular, a number of pupils are receiving intensive support to boost their number skills. Their confidence, particularly in using strategies for calculation, had been eroded by weaknesses in learning earlier in their school career. Most are now making up the lost ground.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Relationships between pupils are good throughout the school. Older pupils have a good regard for the safety and well-being of younger pupils in the playground, and in class pupils work very well together in discussing how to solve problems and improve the quality of their work. Pupils behave well and make an effective contribution to the life of the school. They willingly take on responsibilities given to them, such in their roles as 'busy bees' or monitors. The school council is consulted on key new developments and has played an important part in deciding which new play equipment to install. Pupils' cultural development is supported by the highly effective work undertaken with visiting artists and writers. Effective curricular projects have been established to develop pupils' understanding of Christian and Jewish faiths, but pupils have a limited awareness of the diversity of cultures and faiths in current Britain. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live and eat healthily, and can explain how and why they have made the contents of their lunchboxes healthier.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers make learning enjoyable by using a variety of approaches and by making very good use of resources, including computers, visits and visitors. In the Foundation Stage, activities are well balanced to engage children and develop their skills across all areas. Careful assessment of pupils' progress through the Reception Year helps teachers to ensure that tasks provide children with suitable challenges. In some activities, however, children would benefit from more adult intervention to offer clearer direction. The appointment of a teaching assistant for next term should help in this. Across the school, teachers plan activities which are skilfully adapted to suit the capabilities of pupils in their class. At times, teachers' questioning of pupils in

whole-class discussions is not always sufficiently well adapted to draw in and challenge all pupils. However, by discussing with pupils what is needed to make a piece of work successful, and getting pupils to evaluate their own work against these criteria, teachers help pupils to become self-critical and independent in improving their own learning, and that of their peers. 'You need a comma in there somewhere', said one, having glanced briefly at a friend's writing!

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good overall. An outstanding feature is the quality of links which are made between subjects to develop pupils' skills in interesting and relevant situations. Thus, work of high quality in art and design emerged from a session with a visiting artist which also made powerful links with the books and characters pupils were studying in literacy. Pupils' personal development is well supported by a good programme of personal, social and health education. Whilst there are few direct links with businesses to allow pupils to find out about the world of work, pupils engage in a number of projects to find out about their local environment, and develop some basic enterprise skills through work in organising fundraising events. Despite its small size, the school is able to offer a sound range of well-attended extra-curricular activities in sport and the arts.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school looks after its pupils well. Appropriate policies and procedures to protect and safeguard the well-being of children are in place. Parents speak very highly of the quality of school's support for the individual needs of pupils, and of the school's prompt and effective response to any concerns. Detailed systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress enable staff to intervene swiftly, with additional support where there are signs of underachievement. Pupils with LDD are well supported and the school draws effectively on the help and advice of external agencies to help pupils meet their targets. The school's system for setting all pupils individual targets in literacy is exemplary and highly effective. Pupils' understanding about how they should improve their work in mathematics is, however, comparatively less clear, although teachers' marking is beginning to provide more details about what pupils should work on and practise.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's very rapid improvement over the last three years is due in large part to the vision, energy and drive of the headteacher, supported by highly effective governance. Strong relationships have been developed throughout the school community through wider consultation with parents and pupils, and useful links have been developed in the wider community. The school's provision of a breakfast club offers a useful service to working parents, and it has launched a bid to fund after-school provision. The school has considerably sharpened its attention to raising the standards of pupils, and has been highly successful in meeting the key areas for improvement highlighted in the last inspection report. Writing standards were the key areas of concern and evidence shows that these standards are now very high. However, pupils' standards and progress in mathematics are comparatively not as strong. The school's self-evaluation has picked this up but has yet to make it a sufficiently high priority in the school

development plan. Further focus on improvement in this area could raise pupils' overall achievements further and make them outstanding.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Maidwell Primary School, Maidwell, Northamptonshire. NN6 9JF

Many thanks for the welcome you gave me when I visited your school for its recent inspection. I much enjoyed talking to you, and seeing you in your lessons. It was good to see you producing such high quality paintings with your visiting artist.

Maidwell is a good school. It helps you to achieve well and reach standards which are higher than found in most schools. This is mainly because the teaching and curriculum are both so good. Your teachers provide you with a very good range of interesting activities. You clearly enjoy these a great deal, and your excellent attendance records are a clear indication of how much you like coming to school. Your teachers look after you well and provide you with good support. They keep a very close eye on your progress. You make really good use of your targets and success measures in literacy to make excellent progress in your writing. It is really good to see you looking carefully at your work to see how you can improve it. Everyone seems to get on well together and is prepared to help each other and contribute to school activities.

The school is well led, and the headteacher and governors have done some excellent work in taking the school forward since its last inspection. My report points out some ways in which the school could get even better, and these are the main ones:

- raise your achievement in mathematics by giving you clear guidance on how to improve, as your teachers have done so successfully in writing. You can help in this by following your teachers' guidance very carefully when you work with numbers.
- show up more clearly the most important areas for improvement in the school's performance, so that the school can concentrate hard on getting these matters right.

I wish you every success for the future.

Ian Hodgkinson Lead inspector