



# Maidenbower Infant School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 125962  
**Local Authority** West Sussex  
**Inspection number** 293414  
**Inspection date** 30 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** David Collard

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant	<b>School address</b>	Harvest Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Maidenbower
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		Crawley RH10 7RA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01293 886324
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	242	<b>Fax number</b>	01293 887056
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	David Palmer
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Collins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 November 2001		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

Maidenbower is a larger than average infant school serving the immediate local area of mixed housing on the outskirts of Crawley. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below the national average. As part of the West Sussex plan, the school was reorganised in September 2004 from a first to an infant school. A new headteacher was appointed in May 2006. Although the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language has been increasing slightly over the last year, it still remains below the national average.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. It knows its strengths and weaknesses well and has continued to improve since the last inspection. Teaching is good, ensuring all pupils achieve well. For the last five years, standards at the end of Year 2 have been above those achieved nationally. The personal development of pupils is excellent because of the outstanding care, welfare and guidance that are provided.

The reason why pupils make good progress and reach standards above those expected for their age is because there is a common sense of purpose amongst all staff about ensuring pupils fulfil their potential. Pupils start in the Reception classes with standards in line with those expected for their age. The provision here is good so that by the start of Year 1, nearly all pupils have achieved, and some exceeded, the expectations of the nationally recognised early learning goals. Through the whole school, teachers' understanding of how to develop each pupil's potential means that work is exciting and challenging. Pupils' writing is particularly well developed. The increasing numbers of pupils with English as an additional language make equally good progress. Analysis shows that some pupils who entered the school with no English gain the higher Level 3 by the end of Year 2. The good, varied curriculum is centred around pupils' own experiences as well as planning to ensure that skills specific to each subject are learnt sequentially. However, pupils are not always sufficiently aware of the particular subject skills which they are learning, and their importance in preparing them for their future. For instance Year 2 pupils said, 'We do not do much science' even though it is clear that they have completed many experiments when teachers have told them to 'put on their science hats'.

The lively discussions with pupils along with the responses to parent questionnaires clearly indicate how very much the children enjoy school. In the comprehensive home-school books, there are a number of occasions when pupils have asked their parents to follow up work, for instance by visiting places of interest for further research. Pupils are supported and cared for exceptionally well because guidance they receive balances both personal and academic need.

The school's good provision has come about because of the very clear vision of the headteacher and the high but realistic expectations she sets her staff. Recently, there have been a number of significant changes to the senior management, governing body and teaching staff. The highly analytical self-evaluation concentrates on the outcomes for pupils and the reasons why things are as they are. This, along with the many refinements that have been made to the already good provision, demonstrates the school's excellent capacity to improve. It has resulted in a vibrant, friendly and challenging learning environment.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Develop pupils' awareness and knowledge of differences in skills required across different subjects in preparation for their future schooling.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' achievement and standards are good and this level of progress starts on entry to the school. Reception classes have been very well developed into separate areas both inside and out. The apparent free-flow approach is nevertheless extremely well structured. It allows pupils to make their own decisions and, because of the comprehensive assessments and planning, this moves their learning on well. This continues through Years 1 and 2, where pupils know it as their 'learning journey'. Work in books is comprehensive and covers many different subjects. For instance, a topic about Australia has evidence of good progress in writing, geography, history and art. The school is now working on ensuring that the identity of each subject is more clearly defined so that pupils can see how subjects interrelate. Writing has been a whole-school focus and there are many examples of high quality and individual descriptive writing, letters, lists and evaluations at a level that would be expected of older pupils. As a result, the challenging targets set for pupils have been consistently reached.

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

### **Grade: 1**

On visiting the school, it does not take long to realise that the personal development of pupils, along with their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, is excellent. They are polite, friendly and highly interesting to talk with. The school is calm and orderly, and behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are confident speakers, avidly wanting to share their views and experiences. All this possibly explains why attendance is well above the national average and pupils are well prepared for their future. Pupils understand how to lead healthy lives. For instance, during lunchtime, one pupil who was eating a selection of fresh fruit explained that an inspector should only have chocolate biscuits in his lunchbox one day a week! Pupils also know how to work safely. The school council has, for example, considered what can be done to make sure the 'playground angels' keep an eye on safe play. Pupils make a good contribution to the community and were involved, along with other schools, in a project to construct a wall mural for the entry to the local estate.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching throughout the school is good overall and the realistic analysis from the school's monitoring suggests that some individual lessons are outstanding. Notable in all lessons is the good use of previous assessment to refocus planning. This ensures that pupils do not mark time and are consistently challenged to build upon what they have already learnt. Pupils are told clearly what they are to learn and how this will be achieved. They are often asked how well they are doing. In a discussion with a visitor,

for instance, when asked for their opinion about some work, they highlighted their explanation with a thumbs up or down signal, something they use regularly in lessons. Marking, records of pupils' work, and portfolios are particularly thorough. These are used both at an individual level to check day-to-day progress but also at a whole-school level to ensure all groups are progressing as well as they should. There have been significant staff changes and the school is now undertaking rigorous monitoring to ensure that practice is fully consistent across all subjects and classes.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The good curriculum has the potential to be even better once the new systems have become embedded into everyday practice. It has been based on an understanding of how children learn best. It involves pupils working well, both independently and with each other. Exciting projects and topics have been undertaken on a regular basis, all of which are planned to ensure that the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and technology have sufficient emphasis. Notable amongst these are the extra-curricular activities which are numerous and varied, ranging from yoga to a Saturday patchwork club for families.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The outstanding care, guidance and support start from pupils' entry into the school. Transition arrangements from the nursery settings are well established and very careful attention is paid to knowing all pupils' needs well. Very good support is provided for those with learning difficulties and for the increasing numbers of pupils with English as an additional language. The high calibre of this support is being demonstrated by the school's efforts to try to ensure these pupils' particular needs can be even more effectively provided for. Academic support is of extremely high quality due to the comprehensive systems and analysis that take place. This is at the core of individual and group targets as well as ensuring all teachers are held to account for the performance of their whole class

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher, only recently appointed, has an extremely clear vision about how to move the school on. She has set about ensuring that this vision is clear to all staff, pupils and parents, and that governors are in agreement. It is clear from parents' and pupils' responses that they fully support these ideals. Already there has been success in the maintaining of good standards and a more consistent improvement rate amongst all groups of pupils. She is ably supported by a temporary deputy headteacher and newly appointed senior staff. Whilst it is still early days to have had a full impact on the school's overall effectiveness, the initial excellent self-evaluation is comprehensive and rigorous. The school knows its strengths well, while at the same time being very

realistic about what can be improved. It bases this analysis directly on the outcomes of pupils, which makes the targets highly challenging for all who are involved. Governance is good and meets all statutory requirements. However, there is also a realisation that the governing body now needs to be better informed so that they can play a more confident and active role in pursuing the school's ambition of becoming one of the best.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<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	1
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>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1
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>	1

<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.

## 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	1
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	2
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**

Thank you making me feel so welcome during my recent visit. I very much enjoyed hearing all about your school. As I promised some of you, I have written the main points of my report below.

- You told me what a good school you were at and I agree. You very clearly enjoy all the work you are given to do.
- I think you are all extremely well behaved. You were very polite and were really keen to tell me about your work.
- You and your parents and carers told me that you thought you were taught well and again, I agree. I can see from all the challenging activities you do and the targets you have in your books that you make good progress through all classes in the school.
- You may not know, but children in Year 2 reach higher standards in the end of key stage assessments than in many other schools. Those of you now in Year 2 have a lot to live up to!
- I know that you feel looked after extremely well. Those of you I spoke to said how you felt happy at playtimes and knew what to do if you had any problems. The 'playground angels' are helping to make this even better.
- Your teachers are making each subject very interesting. I have asked them to make sure that you always know which skills you are learning and which subjects they are linked to, for example when doing experiments which are helping you to prepare for your future learning in science. This will help you when you move onto your next school.
- Your headteacher has a very clear idea of what to do to help you all make even better progress. She, along with the other staff, are already working on ways to try to make your school become one of the best. You can do your bit to by making sure you always try your hardest and complete the good targets you are set in your lessons.

Finally, I would like to wish you all the best for the future and do keep up the good work.