



Maidenbower Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131603
Local Authority West Sussex
Inspection number 293794
Inspection dates 30–31 January 2007
Reporting inspector Diane Wilkinson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Harvest Road
School category	Community		Maidenbower
Age range of pupils	7–11		Crawley RH10 7RA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01293 883758
Number on roll (school)	578	Fax number	01293 889409
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Anne Newson
		Headteacher	Chris Murphy
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Maidenbower is a large junior school serving a comparatively advantaged housing estate. Numbers have expanded rapidly over the past few years and the age of entry changed from eight to seven in September 2004. As a result, attainment on entry has varied, but is currently above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average and the school also contains a unit for pupils who have specific learning difficulties. Around ten per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, a small number of whom speak English as a second language. The school holds the Investors in People and Eco-Schools awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Maidenbower Junior is a good school with significant strengths in some areas of its work. Pupils enjoy school very much and parents are very appreciative of all that it has to offer. As one parent commented, 'The school has many excellent qualities, including a good headteacher and teaching staff who are very parent- friendly and approachable.'

The school's success is underpinned by the headteacher's vision of what it should offer its pupils. He has successfully created a team of staff and governors who share his vision and are committed to improving the school's provision and raising standards. Leadership and management at all levels are good and resources are used effectively to provide good value for money. Accurate self-evaluation and identification of weaknesses have helped the school to address these well in mathematics, science and reading. Although the school has been slower to improve higher-attaining pupils' progress in writing, this is now being effectively addressed and the school is particularly well placed to improve further.

Pupils achieve well. Overall standards are above average, and well above average in science and in reading. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make very good progress as a result of the excellent support and teaching they receive.

The quality of care, guidance and support given to pupils is outstanding. Pupils feel very safe, secure and happy in school and their personal development is excellent. Their very good behaviour, consideration of others and willingness to accept responsibility help them become mature, confident and helpful. Relationships throughout the school are very good. The school's procedures for academic support and guidance are innovative and very effective. Pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve and they receive very good support to help them do so.

Teaching and learning are consistently good and staff are very good at helping pupils to challenge themselves to do even better. The use of 'success criteria' to help pupils recognise what they need to do to make progress is a major reason why they do well. Pupils take a great deal of pride in their work, which is always carefully recorded. The good curriculum has been effectively planned to help pupils develop literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills as well as offering creative activities and the opportunity to learn modern foreign languages. The quality and range of extra-curricular activities, including residential visits, is outstanding and helps encourage pupils' very positive attitudes to school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that higher-attaining pupils develop the skills that will allow them to reach the standards of which they are capable in writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Throughout the school pupils achieve well. Standards have risen steadily over the past three years and, by Year 6, are above average overall. In the 2006 Year 6 national tests the school exceeded the challenging targets set and is well placed to do so again this year. Standards on entry for the 2006 and current Year 6 pupils were broadly in line with expectations.

Pupils make very good progress in science and standards in this subject are well above average. Standards in mathematics are above average and pupils' computation skills are excellent. Standards in English are above average overall, but they are well above average in reading because pupils make very good progress in this aspect. In the last two years, test results indicate that, while most pupils made good progress in writing, higher-attaining pupils did not do as well as they should. The school has begun to address this issue and progress in writing is rapidly improving. The presentation of pupils' work is very good.

As a result of the outstanding support and guidance they receive, pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make very good progress and many reach at least average standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The positive attitudes of pupils are a striking feature of this school. They are quick to praise their teachers and talk about the subjects they like. Levels of attendance have improved and are now well above average. Behaviour around the school is very good and pupils have a good sense of social responsibility. They are adamant that bullying is not a problem in the school and that relationships between pupils are very good. As one parent wrote, 'The children seem to be very happy here and the atmosphere is one of respect and enthusiasm.' The school works hard to promote this atmosphere. The 'learning partners' system helps pupils understand that they have an important role to play in helping one another to learn. As a result, they develop very good inter-personal skills, self-esteem and independence.

Other aspects of school life, such as the Eco-Schools scheme and various monitor duties, ensure pupils are thoroughly involved in the school community. They also have a good understanding of the importance of healthy and safe lifestyles. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. In particular, the developing work on global citizenship and on rights and responsibilities is effectively broadening pupils' horizons and developing tolerance and respect for others' attitudes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and, underpinned by effective planning, the consistent approach across all classes ensures pupils make good progress throughout the school. A particularly strong feature of lessons is that pupils are encouraged to discuss their work with a learning partner. This helps them to understand easily and gain confidence in explaining their methods or answers. In the past the teaching of writing did not meet the needs of higher-attaining pupils. However, this is much improved and the recently introduced strategy to ensure that pupils are very clear about what they need to do to succeed is starting to bring about better progress. Throughout lessons pupils are continually encouraged to assess how well they are doing and challenged to move on to harder work when they have completed a task correctly. They respond to this particularly well. The teaching of pupils with specific learning needs in small groups or in the unit is excellent and supports the very good progress they make.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is very well balanced and stimulating. As well as promoting the development of basic skills, the topic-based approach ensures there is an effective focus on creative aspects such as art, music and drama. Developing programmes of work for English are helping higher-attaining pupils to make better progress in writing, although they have yet to impact on test results. Planning is well tailored to individual pupils' needs and the individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are outstanding. The effective programme for personal, social and health education means that pupils' personal development is excellent.

The range and quality of extra-curricular activities is excellent and the opportunity to learn modern foreign languages broadens pupils' learning. Residential visits which provide exciting opportunities for challenging activities are highly regarded by parents and effectively support pupils' social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils benefit from outstanding care, guidance and support which contribute to both their personal development and academic progress. Rigorous procedures for ensuring the health and safety of pupils and arrangements for the vetting of staff comply fully with government guidelines.

The very effective system for setting improvement targets is a major factor in pupils' good achievement. These are precise, regularly reviewed and closely linked to the 'success criteria' built in to lesson planning. Pupils recognise how important these

criteria are in helping them to make good progress. Pupils also play a significant role in helping one another check up on how well they are doing.

The support and guidance given to pupils with specific learning or emotional needs is excellent and is the result of early identification, skilled teaching and a clear focus on helping pupils get back on track.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good, with some notable areas of excellence. The key to the school's success is the very effective leadership of the headteacher, which has empowered staff to take on management roles effectively and to develop the skills needed to help the school move forward. As a result, subject co-ordinators make an important contribution by checking on the effectiveness of the school's provision and helping to raise standards. Year leaders play an equally successful role in ensuring that teaching is consistently good and that pupils receive a high level of care and support.

Rigorous, detailed and accurate monitoring of the school's work and pupils' progress has meant that the school has a clear picture of how well it is doing. The school has successfully identified areas of comparative weakness and has raised standards in mathematics, science and reading. It has been slower in addressing weaknesses in higher-attaining pupils' progress in writing, although this is now being successfully addressed. Governors make a valuable contribution to the school. They are very well informed, play an important part in school review and development and use their expertise effectively to benefit the school.

Excellent teamwork, a high level of commitment to school improvement and very effective management systems result in the school being exceptionally well placed to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 for welcoming us to your school. We were especially impressed by how friendly, polite and helpful you are. I particularly want to thank the pupils who gave up their lunch time to speak with us. You and your parents think your school is a good place to be and we agree with you. It is giving you a good education and you are making good progress.

This is what we thought was good about the school.

- You are making good progress in English and mathematics and very good progress in science. The standards you reach are above average.
- Pupils who find learning difficult receive excellent help and make very good progress.
- Your personal development is very good. You enjoy school very much, work hard and your behaviour is excellent.
- The activities teachers plan for you and the quality of teaching are good.
- Staff take excellent care of you and give you very good guidance on how you can do even better in your work.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors have helped your school improve well over the last few years and they are working successfully to help it improve even further.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Continue to improve the planning and teaching of writing so that all pupils do as well as they can. You can help by making sure that you always do your best in your written work.

Thank you again for all your help and good luck for the future.