

Mapplewell Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131949
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	293899
Inspection dates	6-7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Jane Hughes

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Roy Miller
Headteacher	Mrs Hilary Galvin
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2003
School address	Greenside Avenue Staincross Barnsley South Yorkshire S75 6BB
Telephone number	01226 381273
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average size school is situated in a former mining village. An average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are of White British heritage and only a small number speak a language other than English at home. Fewer pupils than average have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupil mobility is quite high due to the transient nature of some families. The school achieved both Investors in People and Healthy School status in 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Mapplewell Primary is a good school that continues to improve. Inspection findings reflect the opinions of parents and pupils and the school's own view of itself in every respect. There is evidence of good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils now achieve well. Indeed, achievement was at an all-time high in 2006. Pupils attain broadly average standards by Year 6 from low starting points, although attainment in writing and mathematics is still slightly below average. Much of the school's success is due to the tenacious resolve of the headteacher, who motivates pupils, staff and governors to succeed. As a result, there is strong leadership and management at all levels. Stable staffing, clear direction and high expectations combine to demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further.

Confident teachers and skilful teaching assistants ensure the consistent daily delivery of good teaching and learning throughout the school. In particular, the good quality and standards in the Foundation Stage, supported by some outstanding teaching, ensures that young children get off to a flying start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Nevertheless, throughout the school, staff do not always encourage pupils to develop and practise their speaking skills through extended questioning during lessons. An increasingly practical and good quality curriculum maintains the interest of pupils and encourages them to make the most of their time at school. An intrinsically caring school, Mapplewell provides very good support for vulnerable pupils, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the few pupils who are learning to speak English, so all make similar progress to and achieve as well as others. Levels of care, guidance and support are good overall because the school tracks pupils' progress carefully and offers effective academic and personal support. Well developed partnerships with other schools and outside agencies ensure that pupils and staff benefit from local expertise in areas such as music, modern foreign languages and sport as well as in their personal development. The school enjoys a good relationship with the community. Staff involve local service providers as often as possible as they extend pupils' understanding of the world beyond school.

Pupils enjoy school enormously and most attend regularly. They take responsibility for different aspects of school life and become trustworthy members of the community. Increasingly, they know what it means to live healthy and safe lifestyles. A large proportion of parents speak highly of the school. They say their children are happy here and 'come on in leaps and bounds' during their time at school. Although some parents attend family learning activities specifically arranged for them by the school, they are the minority. Overall, parents are not closely involved in the life of the school or their children's education. As a result, they offer limited support for their children's learning, both in school and at home.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by Year 6, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Make better use of open-ended questions to help pupils develop their vocabulary and improve their communication skills.
- Increase parental involvement in their children's learning and the life of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children join the school with skills well below those expected for their age. In particular, their weak communication and social skills present continuing barriers to learning as pupils move

through school. By the end of Reception, children have made good progress, although standards are still below the goals set for this age group. Pupils achieve well through the school. By Year 2, standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. By Year 6, standards are broadly average overall, although slightly below average in mathematics and writing. A small, yet significant, number of pupils join or leave throughout the school year. Their fractured attendance patterns severely restrict the standards they attain and the progress they make and also affect the school's performance scores. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the skilful support they receive from teachers and well deployed teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are eager to talk about their school and are quick to welcome visitors to their classrooms. Many enjoy learning to play musical instruments. One pupil declared, 'I play the clarinet in school. It's really wicked!' Pupils behave well and have a good understanding of the reasons for the simple school rules. They digest the wealth of information on the attractive displays around school as they go about their daily routines. As a result, they have a growing understanding of how to improve their physical and emotional well-being and are laying the foundations for healthy and successful futures. They use the good quality playground equipment with great enthusiasm. For instance, the amphitheatre provides a perfect backdrop for budding actors. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. As well as showing sensitive support for the needs of those less fortunate than themselves, older pupils in particular are quick to take responsibility for school life, for example through school and class councils. There are few opportunities for younger pupils to make significant contributions in the same way. The majority of pupils are brought to school regularly by their parents but a small number of pupils have very poor attendance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Some innovative practice promotes pupils' independent learning and problem-solving skills, both important elements for their future success. Regular activities such as 'Thinking Activities in a Social Context' (TASC) bring pupils face to face with modern-day problems and how to solve them as they devote a whole day to these activities. These practical sessions ensure pupils' keen participation in lessons and help them to make good progress. Good use of interactive technology stimulates pupils' interest and achievement. Adults' high expectations ensure that pupils behave consistently well and waste little time in school. Although teachers check pupils' understanding with regular questioning in lessons, there is not enough use of open-ended questions to develop pupils' vocabulary or extend their communication skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum provision centres on an enjoyable and stimulating programme of activities. Some first-class experiences in the Foundation Stage ensure that young children have a strong basis on which to build future learning. Resources throughout the school are good. Information and communication technology is used particularly well to support pupils'

learning. Teachers make increasingly useful links between curriculum subjects, with a particular focus on literacy, although the creative curriculum is still developing. At the time of the inspection, the outdoor learning area in the Foundation Stage was being redeveloped so children had no continuous access to the outdoor learning environment. Good links with local schools bring additional dimensions to the curriculum for gifted and talented pupils, support pupils' transfer to Year 7 and provide expertise in areas such as dance and sports for pupils and staff.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

First-class pastoral care for pupils ensures their health, safety and well-being at all times. The school takes its duty of care seriously and has a well deserved reputation for providing high quality support for vulnerable pupils and their families. Pupils say they 'feel safe and looked after' in school. Procedures for safeguarding learners are in place and adults are aware of health and safety procedures. Well established pastoral support programmes help pupils move from one stage of education to another. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are at an early stage of learning English receive very good support through the early identification of their particular needs. Parents recognise this with comments such as; 'There is a lot of team building in this school where the children are allowed to move at their own pace.' Teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully and pupils have a good understanding of how well they are doing. For example, one pupil commented, 'I love maths! I definitely did better today.' Even so, teachers' marking does not always make the next steps in learning clear enough to pupils. Parental involvement in their children's learning peaks in the Foundation Stage. Thereafter, it dwindles with few parents regularly coming to help with pupil's learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has overseen sustained improvements during her six-year tenure. With a completely new team of teachers and teaching assistants, the leadership team lacks only a substantive deputy headteacher. Other senior leaders and middle managers form a proactive and successful leadership team and keep a keen eye on the school's performance. They quickly identify any possible underachievement and ensure that rapid interventions are put in place to support pupils' ongoing good progress. The headteacher invites all staff to take responsibility for different aspects of the school and leadership is shared well. Governors offer challenge and support. They show a keen interest in making the school as effective as possible. As yet, they are not fully involved in the school's self-evaluation process. Even so, the school is demonstrably self-reflective with a balanced view of its key priorities. Development plans are simple so staff, governors and pupils have a clear idea of what is expected of them. Good financial management ensures that the school is well resourced, as seen in the ongoing redevelopment of the outside environment in the Foundation Stage. Efficient administrators, lunchtime and ancillary staff support the work of the school very well.

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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>	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 quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
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	3
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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

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?	2

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.

Annex A

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	2
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	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

Inspection of Mapplewell Primary School, Barnsley, S75 6BB

Thank you for your friendly welcome when we visited your school. We were pleased that so many of you came to talk to us during our visit. You will not be surprised that we judge yours to be a good school, just as you told us. We saw how much you enjoy your lessons because teachers make them fun and interesting. You make good progress through school and standards are rising as a result. The delicious lunches, fruit snacks and sports activities all help you to understand more about how to live healthy and safe lives. School and class councils help you to let the adults know what you think about school and what you would like to change. You are learning to be more patient with others, to listen to their views and to think before speaking. All these are important life skills that make you more responsible citizens. Your headteacher, governors and all the staff make sure you are safe and well cared for. They are also very good at helping your families when they need it.

Part of our job is to see what your school can do to improve. We have asked your headteacher and all the adults to help you reach higher standards by the time you leave Year 6, especially in mathematics and writing. You can help by coming to school regularly and trying really hard in every lesson. The teachers and teaching assistants will give you support with this. We have asked them to use even more questions in lessons so you spend more time practising thinking through answers and explaining your thinking out loud to your classmates. The last thing we have asked your school to do is to persuade your parents to help even more with your learning, in school and at home. It would be really good if they became more involved in school life too - try to find some ways to persuade them because they'll enjoy it as much as you do!

Mrs Ravey, Mrs Zaffar and I hope you have a very happy summer. Keep working hard and trying your best.