



# Maple House Independent School

Independent School

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Inspection report

DfES Registration Number      306/6090  
Unique Reference Number      131770  
Inspection number              296844  
Inspection dates                6-7 February 2007  
Reporting inspector              Mr R Kapadia HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Age group 3-11	Published 2 March 2007	Reference no. 296804
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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Maple House Independent School aims to provide a challenging, stimulating and broadening education, where *'each child can feel secure and confident in a friendly learning environment.'* In less than eight years of its existence, the school has grown from being a nursery to one which also takes children in the whole primary age range; it occupies carefully adapted premises in the heart of Thornton Heath. Within a secure atmosphere it aims to develop enquiring minds by having clear expectations of attitudes and behaviour. Its pupils, half of whom are in the nursery phase, come from a rich mix of ethnic groups, but there are no pupils with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language. The school offers extended day care, which has yet to be registered.

## Evaluation of the school

Maple House school offers a satisfactory quality of education in a friendly setting where pupils behave well. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The curriculum, teaching and pupils' progress are satisfactory as is welfare, where a number of policies need updating.

## Quality of education

The overall curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and includes most of the subjects in the National Curriculum; the Foundation Stage is based on Montessori principles. The overall teaching time exceeds the recommended time and is reasonably balanced, with a strong emphasis on literacy and creative work, including art and music. There are two sessions a week devoted to gymnastics and swimming using local facilities. French is also taught to all children. However, limited attention is given to information and communication technology, which is currently only taught to the older children. Personal, social and health education is taught through other subjects such as cookery, history and geography. There are occasional school trips and a small number of extra-curricular clubs such as French and music.

The school has procedures for selecting the pupils it admits but does not have precise information of their attainment on entry. Children are taught in small

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groups and in mixed age classes from Year 1, with one class which includes three year groups. There is a brief outline of the whole school curriculum policy and all teachers meet at the beginning of each term to plan the content of the curriculum for each subject. Teachers have National Curriculum documents to help planning but these are not used systematically.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory; teachers' lesson plans are relatively brief and relate to the content to be covered, with no specific learning objectives. There are good relationships and children work hard at the tasks which are set; work is usually well matched to the different age groups in each class. In the better lessons teachers offer good individual support and know children well, such as occurred in a lesson on adjectives, proper nouns and prepositions for Year 2 pupils. In some lessons the lack of clear explanations and learning outcomes results in slower progress. Teaching is monitored and some action is taken to effect improvements. Resources are adequate but computers are rarely used.

Pupils enjoy school and make satisfactory progress overall; good progress is made in the more formal aspects of English. Scrutiny of pupils' work confirms that pupils are attaining around Level 4 in Year 6; in Year 2 attainment is also in line with national expectations but higher in English. Pupils' work is marked regularly and, in some cases, teachers make useful comments on how work can be improved or give praise for good work. Over the last few years the test results at Key Stage 1 are above national averages; at Key Stage 2 the results for 2005 were close to the national average. The latest nursery report shows satisfactory progress toward the early learning goals.

### Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. It is strongly embedded in the school's ethos and its Montessori philosophy.

Spiritual awareness is not taught formally, since it is a school policy not to teach religious education. However, the teachers have an understanding of 'the inner child' from their training which informs the way they interact with children.

Moral and social development is underpinned well by the school's expectations for politeness and treating others well. The small classes support close relationships between staff and pupils. The school has a behaviour policy with a range of sanctions for bad behaviour. As a result pupils behave well and are polite and respectful.

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Cultural development is good. Many cultural backgrounds are represented among both the staff and the pupils. Teachers include cultural projects in their curriculum, including, for example, recent projects on Mexico and India, although these are not specifically planned on a whole-school basis. Pupils gain a good understanding of and respect for their own and other cultures.

Pupils enjoy school life and help in keeping their classroom clean and tidy. Some older pupils have responsibilities as prefects and help to clean the tables for dining in the hall. Pupils are also involved in charity projects. The preparation for their future economic well-being is satisfactory.

### Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school's overall provision for welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. There is good support for pupils in the daily routines of the school, but the policies for some aspects have not been reviewed to ensure that current guidelines are met. There is no specific policy to combat bullying, though children did note that it was rare. There is a child protection policy, but there is no named child protection officer nor has there been recent inter-agency training. Procedures for outside trips have been devised but need to be more robust to ensure that risk assessments are routinely undertaken. However, training in First Aid has been recently undertaken by all staff.

There is a comprehensive health and safety handbook which has been recently devised. Fire drills are undertaken regularly and recorded. Provision for healthy living is promoted by the time allocated to physical education, as well as in subjects like science. Meals are also cooked on the premises.

The admissions book has not been kept up to date, but attendance registers are called daily. The proprietor noted that the accommodation complied with disability discrimination legislation when it was refurbished, and that no pupil would be denied admission because of a disability.

### Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Prior to appointments being confirmed appropriate checks are undertaken relating to an applicant's identity and qualifications, as well as with the Criminal Records Bureau; however, checks are not made relating to medical fitness. Most teachers have Montessori teaching qualifications.

### School's premises and accommodation

The school occupies a single site where the interiors of three former houses have been carefully refurbished to provide appropriate accommodation. There are nine classrooms, most of which have attractive displays of pupils' work. There is a hall, which is used for music and also contains a small library.

There is a small outside play area, although there is a limited range of play equipment; it could also be used on a more regular basis by pupils. The school does not have sufficient toilets for the number of pupils on its roll and there are no facilities for pupils who are ill.

### Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school has a prospectus which contains some useful information, including a brief history of the school, as well as its aims and ethos. However, there are also some omissions. Parents are not informed about the proprietor of the school, nor of the school's policy on exclusions: in practice there have been no exclusions. Parents are also not told about the range of policies which they can request; there is no information about the staff at the school nor about its academic performance. However, parents do receive an annual report of their child's progress.

The return rate for the questionnaire was quite low with only 14 parents responding. They were generally positive about the school; a few raised concerns about the lack of regular communication and limited opportunities for pupils to play outside.

### Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a policy relating to complaints with both informal and formal procedures. The informal procedures have been effective in that the school reports that no formal complaints have been made in the last few years. The formal procedures do not comply fully with current regulations. The procedures do not state that parents can attend and will receive a written copy of any findings by an independent panel. In addition there is no provision to keep written records or to maintain confidentiality relating to formal complaints.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare an appropriate written policy on the school's approaches to combating bullying (paragraph 3(2)(a))

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- have a named child protection officer and ensure that the person has undertaken the relevant training (paragraph 3(2)(b))
  - prepare a suitable written policy on outdoor trips (paragraph 3(2)(c))
  - ensure the admissions register is kept up to date (paragraph 3(9)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- undertake medical checks prior to the confirmation of appointment of staff (paragraph 4(c)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide sufficient washrooms for pupils (paragraph 5(k))
- provide suitable facilities for pupils who are sick (paragraph 5(l)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide details of the proprietor (paragraph 6(2)(b))
- provide its policy on exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e))
- make available, on request, policies on child protection, and health and safety (paragraph 6(2)(h))
- make available, on request, particulars of its academic performance during the preceding year (paragraph 6(2)(i))
- make available, on request, details of the number of complaints in the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j))
- make available, on request, information about staff employed in the school (paragraph 6(2)(k)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

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- allow for parents to attend a panel hearing for a formal complaint (paragraph 7(h))
  - provide for a copy of findings of a panel hearing to be distributed to interested parties (paragraph 7(i))
  - provide for a written record to be kept of all complaints (paragraph 7(j))
  - ensure confidentiality relating to complaints (paragraph 7(k)).

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## School details

Name of school	Maple House School		
DfES number	306/6090		
Unique reference number	131770		
Type of school	Nursery and Primary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	January 1999		
Age range of pupils	3-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 58	Girls: 62	Total: 120
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 4,448-4,950		
Address of school	Maple House School 23-27 Parchmore Road Thornton Heath Surrey CR7 8LY		
Telephone number	0208 653 1827		
Fax number	0208 771 8595		
Email address	<a href="mailto:maplehouseschool@yahoo.co.uk">maplehouseschool@yahoo.co.uk</a>		
Headteacher	Mrs P Khoo		
Proprietor	Mrs P Khoo		
Reporting inspector	Mr R Kapadia HMI		
Dates of inspection	6-7 February 2007		