

# Maple Grove Infant School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110640
<b>Local Authority</b>	CAMBRIDGESHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	310372
<b>Inspection date</b>	8 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Roger Brown

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	265
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mark Greenall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lynda Quince
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Maple Grove March Cambridgeshire PE15 8JT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01354 653337
<b>Fax number</b>	01354 653373

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–7
<b>Inspection date</b>	8 February 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	310372

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. He evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the achievement and standards reached by the children; the quality of the teaching and the impact of monitoring and evaluation on pupils' progress; the care, guidance and support provided; and the effectiveness of the leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from observing work in classrooms, as well as scrutinising school documentation and records of pupils' achievement and progress. It also involved discussions with senior leaders, teachers and teaching assistants as well as the children. The views of the parents were taken into account through the questionnaire returns. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and where appropriate, these have been included in the report.

## Description of the school

Maple Grove is an average sized infant school serving the town of March and the surrounding area. Over 90% of the children are White British, however, a growing number from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds are now starting to attend the school. A small proportion of this group do not speak English as their first language. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals is just below average. The proportion of children who need additional support is below average, and a small number of these have statements of special educational need. The average level of development for children starting at the school is below national expectations. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

## 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, most notably in the school's leadership and management. This has led to a significant improvement since the last inspection when the school was judged to be satisfactory. Parents have noted the improvement and many commented on this in their responses for the inspection questionnaire. For example, one wrote, 'I feel that Maple Grove has improved more and more every year.' Standards achieved by the children, are good and have advanced substantially over the past three years and in some areas, they are outstanding. Standards in reading are well above national expectations, and they are above national averages in mathematics and in writing, though the outcomes in writing are not yet as consistent as the other areas. The staff are aware that some boys do not make quite such good progress as the girls.

The children get an excellent start to their education in the Foundation Stage. They then make good progress throughout the school. Their achievement is good overall, but outstanding in reading where the great majority make much larger than expected advances in their learning. Children's progress in writing and mathematics is good. Two teachers have been taking part in a carefully structured research project with Cambridge University. As a result of their work, there is now compelling evidence that thoughtful and creative use of information and communication technology (ICT) has brought about a marked improvement in the quality of the children's writing in the two classes involved.

Good teamwork between all staff, and high expectations for what the children can achieve, is having a positive impact and improving the quality of teaching and learning. This is now consistently good and at times outstanding. Teachers are thoughtful, creative and happy to try out new ideas. Very effective monitoring systems are used to evaluate the impact of teaching. As a result, teachers understand what works well and are all focused on the progress of children across the whole of their time in school rather than just in their classes. There is a strong recognition that the constructive criticism, support and feedback that teachers receive from the leadership, and each other, as part of the regular monitoring process, is building their expertise and refining their practice. The knowledgeable teaching assistants play an important role in reinforcing this practice. Their work is particularly important in relation to the children who need additional support with their learning. These children also make good progress because their needs are accurately identified and they are given the necessary time and attention to help to overcome their difficulties. The small numbers of children from Eastern European backgrounds are, like the other children who need to learn English as an additional language, making good progress. Where possible, these children are paired together and encouraged to support each other's learning. All are rapidly acquiring confidence in their ability to use English.

The good quality curriculum supports teaching and learning well particularly in respect of the improved ICT provision. The school is fortunate in that it has extensive grounds; however, these are underexploited, a fact that was noted by a few parents. Despite the recognition that some of the boys in particular need a wider range of opportunities to learn in alternative ways, this resource is underdeveloped. Nevertheless, children's welfare has a very high priority in the school. The care, guidance and support they receive are good in all respects. Their personal development is also good, although their attendance is only satisfactory as too many parents still take children on holiday in term time. The children are well behaved, polite, friendly and articulate. A simple, but highly effective marking system helps the children to understand what they are doing, and what they need to do to improve. The very good relationships between the

pre-school and the school, and the school and the junior school, ensure that there is a good level of continuity in the children's education. An example of this effective cooperative approach was seen during the inspection. A games afternoon had been planned which involved many mums, dads and grandparents leading activities that all the children enjoyed whilst helping them to make big strides with their learning.

At the last inspection, the school was criticised for failing to develop the leadership role of the teachers. This issue has been addressed very effectively. The leadership and management of the school are now outstanding. It is not just the very effective partnership between the headteacher and deputy, but also the contribution of the wider staff and the governors that is making a difference. The only area where the leadership is not as strong is in relation to the judgements in its self-evaluation. In this respect the leadership underestimates the impact of the improvements that have been made. The school has made excellent progress since the last inspection, particularly in relation to the way that standards have been raised. Given the strength of the leadership, the great teamwork throughout the school, and the highly motivated and committed teaching staff who are actively seeking ways to improve even further, this school has an excellent capacity for continuing improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The excellent provision in the Reception classes gives children many wonderful opportunities in the early years of their schooling. As a result, most children reach or exceed the expected levels by the time they move into Year 1. The excellent leadership guides a thoughtful curriculum planning process, which in turn, ensures that there is a careful match of the tasks and activities to the children's needs. The process is backed up by a system of accurate assessments and careful observations by all the adults. These allow the staff to track the children's progress accurately and target interventions where they are needed. The strong emphasis on all aspects of communication, language and literacy is seen as being essential for the foundation of the children's future success. The children's early success with reading is one outcome of this work. The good quality teaching, combined with strong support from parents, is clearly helping the children to settle quickly and enjoy all aspects of school.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in writing even further, capitalising on the lessons that have been learned from the teachers' active research project.
- Seek ways to extend and improve the outdoor learning environment to maximise the development and achievements of boys.



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

### 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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

<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>	1
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	1
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**

9 February 2008

Dear Children,

Inspection of Maple Grove Infant School, March PE15 8JT

Thank you for being so friendly when I visited your school. I would like to share with you what I found when I spent time in your lessons and talked with you and your teachers.

You go to a good school. Many of your parents wrote to me saying that they think so too. Like them, I could tell that your school is getting better and better and that in some aspects the work you do is outstanding. For instance, what great readers you are.

The standard of work in your school has improved greatly since the last inspection. I could tell from my talks with Year 2 and your teachers that Maple Grove is a happy school. Your teachers have exciting ideas for making your work even more effective. I would like them all to use the ideas that have helped two classes develop their writing skills, and spread these to all the other classes. They have made great use of the ICT equipment to help you learn more effectively.

When I was discussing the progress you make with Mrs Quince and Mrs Corley it was clear that, at times, some of the boys do not progress as fast as the girls. To help the boys in particular, I would like your teachers find new and exciting ways of using the wonderful grounds around the school to develop your skills and understanding in all the different subjects you study.

Finally, I must mention the super start everyone gets in the Foundation Stage. What an excellent beginning to school!

Thank you once again for your warm welcome.

All the best for the future.

Roger Brown

Lead inspector