

Maypole Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118246
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312855
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Wendy Forbes

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	207
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	30
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Johnathan O'Regan
Headteacher	Linda Wilmann
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Franklin Road Dartford DA2 7UZ
Telephone number	01322 523830
Fax number	01322556581

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Maypole is an average sized school that includes Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision for pupils of statutory school age. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. Their difficulties include speech and language problems as well as moderate learning difficulties in literacy and numeracy. The school has received the Activemark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Maypole is a good school. Parents express positive views and rightly say that it is 'a caring school where children are happy and enjoy learning'. Personal development is good. Pupils enjoy a good range of activities, are keen to learn and behave well. There are good procedures for their welfare, health and safety. Pupils feel safe and confident that staff will deal well with any difficulties. Children in the EYFS are well cared for, and settle well into school routines, making satisfactory progress across most areas of learning. A period of staff change has contributed to the variation in standards in the recent past. However, effective current staffing arrangements and the good teamwork evident have been key aspects of the present success in improving standards, which are above average by the end of Year 6. However, standards in writing are not as good as in other subjects and the school is rightly focused on improving this area. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and as a result make good progress. Teaching is good because most lessons are well planned and resourced. Curricular planning is good, providing a wide range of activities which help pupils progress well in their academic and personal development. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which helps to make learning purposeful and fun. A good variety of activities and curricular events contribute to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Effective assessment systems are developing pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. The monitoring of pupils' progress and the use of this information are good and have already impacted significantly on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. Marking and the setting of individual targets provide appropriate levels of guidance to ensure personal goals are met. The acting headteacher and senior staff provide strong leadership. They are fully supported by governors, who carry out their roles well. The good leadership, and strong team ethos amongst the staff, and the consistent raising of standards demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Most children joining the EYFS have the expected skills and understanding for their age. Children are well cared for, and this enables most to settle well into school routines. However, because of the satisfactory teaching and curriculum, most children only make satisfactory progress across the areas of learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to provide children with good support, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the balance between activities that are led by an adult and activities where children work independently as well as outdoor and indoor activities does not always ensure that all children, particularly the more able, are actively engaged in purposeful activities and making the progress expected of them. The teacher generally plans work that stimulates children's interest and sense of enjoyment. However, there are not enough planned opportunities for children to work on structured independent activities either indoors or outdoors. As a result, children do not make as much progress as they could and this is especially the case for the more able children. The school is rightly developing its outdoor facilities for this age group, which are currently too limited to fully support activities across all of the areas of learning. The majority of children work and play well together and, as a result, their behaviour is good for their age. Most children enjoy their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress made in writing by giving pupils more opportunities to practise their writing skills in different subjects.
- Provide more planned opportunities for EYFS children to work independently both indoors and outdoors, and improve the quality of outdoor learning resources.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Current standards are above the national average in Year 2 and significantly above average by the end of Year 6. Children make sound progress in the EYFS and reach the expected levels by the start of Year 1. From Year 1 through to the end of Year 6, pupils make good progress, with exceptional progress made in numeracy, particularly by high attaining pupils. Standards in Year 2 have improved recently to above average as a result of teaching improving to a good level.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress in line with their starting points. Although standards across the school are generally above average, the school rightly recognises that writing remains a relative weakness. However, attainment in writing is improving, reflecting the good progress made in raising standards since the last inspection.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say they enjoy school, confirming the views held by inspectors and the majority of parents. Good behaviour, politeness and good attitudes to work reflect the positive ethos projected by all staff. Pupils say they feel safe and are confident that staff will deal well with any difficulties they experience. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The values shared by pupils and adults alike contribute to the good relationships enjoyed throughout the school. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and are generally sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. They contribute to the school in roles of responsibility, as monitors and members of the school council, who take their responsibilities very seriously, and work hard to improve the environment. In many classes pupils benefit from opportunities to learn about racial equality and different cultures, as seen in their involvement in an African Art and Music Project and in displays around the school reflecting cultural events such as Chinese New Year. However, not all year groups do enough work on this area. Pupils' good skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT prepare them well for the next stage of their education, and their good attitudes and behaviour ensure a smooth transfer to a variety of local secondary schools. Despite the school's good systems to encourage parents and pupils, attendance is only broadly satisfactory because of the rising number of holidays taken in term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The content of the majority of lessons is matched well to most pupils' interests, abilities and needs. This aspect is a particular area of improvement since the last inspection. Lessons are well structured and interesting. Teachers show good subject knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn. In many lessons, the pace is brisk and learning is fun, as seen in a mathematics lesson where pupils used their skills well in handling data to solve a problem. Programmes of

work are planned well, providing clear information about what children are expected to learn and when. However, very occasionally in some lessons, teachers do not make the most of opportunities to challenge higher attaining pupils. Effective use is made of classroom interactive whiteboards to enhance teaching and learning throughout the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress with their learning as a result of the good support they receive, especially from the teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good quality curriculum that places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' creativity. This is an area of particular improvement since the last inspection. A good range of activities and opportunities enriched by visits and visitors ensure that pupils gain a sense of enjoyment in learning. Links made with other subjects ensure activities are studied in sufficient depth. The school has begun work to ensure writing opportunities are developed more extensively in different subjects. However, there remains much scope to develop this area further as a means of enhancing pupils' writing skills. Pupils learn about the importance of healthy lifestyles and staying safe through their involvement in working towards the 'Healthy School' award and 'Safety in Action' initiatives, and priority is given to the PSHE curriculum. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and these are well attended by the pupils, who speak enthusiastically about the range of sport provided.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support throughout the school are good. The majority of parents view Maypole as a caring, friendly, happy and inclusive school. The pastoral and physical care of pupils is very strong and this has had a good impact on pupils' personal development. Robust procedures help to ensure that pupils are well protected. Working closely with teachers, teaching assistants provide strong support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school works with a wide range of outside agencies including visiting counsellors, to provide appropriate support for individual pupils. This tailored support ensures that most of these pupils make good progress. Support and guidance for pupils' academic development have been strengthened since the last inspection by improvements to assessment and marking procedures. These give teachers a clear picture of the progress each pupil makes, impacting significantly on pupils' learning, particularly in literacy. There are examples of good practice in terms of teachers keeping pupils well informed about how well they are doing and, as a result, most pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work. However, there are some year groups where this process does not work so well and the pupils concerned do not have a clear understanding about how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Parents, governors and pupils are united in their confidence in the acting headteacher. The school is well led by the acting headteacher, who has a clarity of vision that is appropriately focused on raising standards. Ably supported by senior staff, she has a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses, demonstrated clearly within the school's rigorous self-evaluation of its performance. The successful introduction of a range of procedures for

monitoring teaching, setting academic targets and assessing pupils' progress has brought about considerable improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, which in turn has led to standards improving. The school provides good opportunities for subject leaders to develop their leadership and management roles. The impact of this can be seen in the development of subject leaders' clear action plans linked to school improvement targets. The leadership team has made good use of pupil assessment information to ensure appropriately challenging school targets are set which are clearly linked to raising standards. Governors are fully supportive of the acting headteacher's and leadership team's efforts to improve the quality of education. They know the school well and are able to provide good support and act as a critical eye whilst also holding the school to account. The school is developing satisfactory provision for global and cultural development within its community cohesion policy, and has good connections with the local community. Nonetheless, there still remains much scope for improving this aspect of the school's work.

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Annex A

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
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

9 October 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Maypole Primary School, Dartford, Kent DA2 7UZ

Thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school when we visited it recently. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at your work. We were very impressed by how hard you work.

You go to a good school where most of you make good progress. Your acting headteacher and staff really care about you and provide lots of interesting extra activities, such as school visits, enrichment activities, sport, French and ICT to help make learning fun.

You told us you enjoy school and work hard to do your best. You get on well with each other and have good attitudes to both work and play. You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy and help others to have a happy time at school. We think the quality of teaching you get is good.

We feel that there are some things that your school could do better. This is because not all of the youngest pupils are achieving their personal best and pupils across the school need to improve their writing skills. We have asked your school to make the following improvements to help.

- Improve the progress you make in writing by giving you more opportunities to practise your writing skills in different subjects.
- Improve the activities provided for children, as well as the outdoor learning area, in the Foundation Stage so that all learners make the best possible progress.

I hope all of you will continue to do all you can to ensure that your school continues to improve and that you achieve the best possible results. Your good behaviour and attitudes will help your teachers work on the things they need to do.

Best wishes for the future.

Wendy Forbes Lead Inspector