

Mapplewells Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122458
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	327734
Inspection date	15 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Keith Edwards

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	263
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ken Sharpe
Headteacher	Miss Claire Varley
Date of previous school inspection	3 April 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Henning Lane off Alfreton Road Sutton-in-Ashfield Nottinghamshire NG17 1HU

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	15 June 2009
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Age group 3-11

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- The rigour of the leadership at all levels in its efforts to raise achievement.
- The quality of teaching and whether it was good enough to enable all of the pupils, particularly those who are entitled to free school meals and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to achieve their best.
- The effectiveness of the school's monitoring, assessment and tracking procedures and whether they are sufficiently robust to enable all of the learners to reach their potential across the curriculum.

The questionnaires returned by parents and a range of school documents, particularly those concerning safeguarding procedures, were scrutinised. Inspectors looked at parts of lessons, met staff, pupils and members of the governing body. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school serves the former mining community of Sutton-in-Ashfield. Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage and all come from homes where English is the first language. The school has a very stable population. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage Unit that caters for children who are over three years old. Children start in the Nursery on a part-time basis with many of the skills expected of their age, but are weaker in language and number skills. There is a wide range of ability in each class. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below that of most schools. Three pupils have a statement of special educational need. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below average.

The school has the Investors in People award, the Activemark award and the Healthy Schools Gold status.

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 that provides a good education for its pupils. It has made good progress since the last inspection and is well placed to go further forward. The school is emerging from an unsettled period that has seen a significant change in staffing. However, it has retained the confidence of the parents throughout this period and has maintained the caring ethos described at the time of the last inspection.

A common feature in all classes is the warmth of the relationships that encourages good discipline and motivates pupils to do their best. Teachers and classroom assistants work effectively together to provide pupils with good support to develop their independent learning skills. Much of the teaching, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6, is lively and dynamic. In most classes, the pace of learning is good. Teachers are skilled at asking open-ended questions to gauge pupils' level of understanding and pupils are keen to respond because they know that their answers will be valued. Although it is an improving picture, not all teaching is as successful at planning for the range of ability within each class. Furthermore, although teachers provide good oral feedback to pupils in class to make sure that they learn from their mistakes, the quality of marking in books lacks consistency and does not always help pupils to improve their work.

The welfare of the pupils is central to the work of the school. Mapplewells has a caring and supportive pastoral ethos, which results in happy, well motivated pupils. As one parent, echoing the views of many others, commented, 'It is a happy family school. The staff truly care for the children and go that extra step further to ensure the best for everyone in their contact'. Good induction procedures ensure a smooth transition into the Early Years Foundation Stage and on to the secondary schools. Rigorous procedures are in place to ensure the safety, security and health of the pupils. Support provided for vulnerable pupils and those who find learning more difficult is good. Parents receive regular information about the curriculum and their child's progress, which they find helpful and informative. Inspection judgements agree with the school's own analysis that the quality of the curriculum is good. It is well structured to meet the needs of pupils, much enriched by visits and clubs, and strongly supports their personal development. Interactive whiteboards are used successfully to enliven the presentation of ideas in class. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use computers to practise their work and for research across the curriculum.

Pupils' personal development is good. Their behaviour is outstanding. Pupils report that they really enjoy coming to school because lessons are fun and there are good opportunities to develop new interests. As one pupil commented, 'Our school is special because we like our teachers'. As a result of a concerted effort to boost attendance, absence rates are much diminished and in line with the national average. Pupils arrive punctually. They report that they feel safe and secure and that they trust the adults to deal effectively with any problems that may occur. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle through the school's many initiatives to promote healthy eating and an active life. Participation in sport is strongly encouraged. Pupils value the care shown to them and are increasingly involved in making decisions, particularly through the school forum, which is very active in raising money for charity and in contributing towards school improvement. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good understanding of their own heritage and a growing awareness of cultural diversity in contemporary society. By the time

they leave, pupils have well-developed social and academic skills to assist their future education and working lives.

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In Key Stage 1, where progress is stronger in Year 2 than it is in Year 1, pupils build well on their achievements in the Foundation Stage to reach standards that are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics year-on-year. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Year 3 and consolidate their learning before progress accelerates again in Years 4, 5 and 6. Pupils meet the challenging targets that are set for them. Overall standards are rising again in the junior classes because the school has improved the quality of teaching and learning. Furthermore, the rigorous application of the school's tracking and assessment procedures to set work at an appropriate level for groups of different abilities is beginning to challenge higher-attaining pupils. Support for those who find learning more difficult is strongly focused to enable these pupils to make good progress. However, there still remains work to be done to match the work set more consistently to different ability groups. Standards in English are now securely above average in Year 6 because the school has made a determined effort to encourage greater fluency in pupils' writing. The school is now providing greater opportunities for practical investigations and problem solving activities that require pupils to use and apply the skills they have learnt. As a result, current standards in mathematics are above average. Standards in science in Year 6 are broadly in line with the national picture.

Leadership and management of the school are good. Since her appointment the headteacher has spent her time productively, strengthening the teamwork and cementing the focus on raising standards. Expectations are rising. The senior leadership team hold an accurate view of the strengths of the school and those areas that need further development. Extensive consultation with the school community has resulted in a clear strategy for continuing improvement. The priorities detailed in the school improvement plan, based on a clear evaluation of its contribution to the broader community and with a clear focus on raising achievement, are entirely appropriate. The quality of governance is good. The governing body is fully involved in the school's strategic development. Governors too have grown in confidence and ability to hold Mapplewells to account, particularly in terms of understanding school effectiveness. The school is at the heart of the community that it serves and works well with other schools and support agencies to heighten effectiveness.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children are provided for well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Starting part-time shortly after their third birthday, they are given a good range of learning activities to cover all areas of learning for their age. Within this range of activities the teachers provide many good opportunities for children to choose those they wish to undertake, along with tasks directed by adults. This ensures that children's initiative and independence in learning is not stifled, while ensuring that specific tasks and skills are developed. As a result of the good planning and teaching they receive, children make good progress. Starting school with attainment that is slightly below that expected for their age, they reach standards that are a little above expected levels by the time they start in Year 1.

Children's personal development is good. They play and work together well. For example, one boy asked another for help when he found difficulty in using a computer program. This help was given readily. Children take turns fairly in the outdoor area when they play with large wheeled toys. This area is a particularly strong feature of the Early Years Foundation Stage

provision. Well-organised resources are available for children to experience learning through, for example, gardening, building, climbing and role-play. They are clearly aware of the routines of the area and follow the rules strictly. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Based on careful assessment, teachers maintain detailed records of how children's skills develop and this information is used well to match the activities to their needs. The strong ties that are nurtured between home and school at this crucial stage of each child's development further strengthen the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

What the school should do to improve further

Children are provided for well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Starting part-time shortly after their third birthday, they are given a good range of learning activities to cover all areas of learning for their age. Within this range of activities the teachers provide many good opportunities for children to choose those they wish to undertake, along with tasks directed by adults. This ensures that children's initiative and independence in learning is not stifled, while ensuring that specific tasks and skills are developed. As a result of the good planning and teaching they receive, children make good progress. Starting school with attainment that is slightly below that expected for their age, they reach standards that are a little above expected levels by the time they start in Year 1.

Children's personal development is good. They play and work together well. For example, one boy asked another for help when he found difficulty in using a computer program. This help was given readily. Children take turns fairly in the outdoor area when they play with large wheeled toys. This area is a particularly strong feature of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision. Well-organised resources are available for children to experience learning through, for example, gardening, building, climbing and role-play. They are clearly aware of the routines of the area and follow the rules strictly. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Based on careful assessment, teachers maintain detailed records of how children's skills develop and this information is used well to match the activities to their needs. The strong ties that are nurtured between home and school at this crucial stage of each child's development further strengthen the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

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	1
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	1
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?	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

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

16 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mapplewells Primary and Nursery School, Sutton-in-Ashfield, NG17 1HU

We really enjoyed our visit to your school this month because everybody was so polite, helpful and friendly. We particularly enjoyed our discussions with you and hearing your views. It was a privilege to be able to work with you in your classrooms, take part in your assembly and meet members of the school forum. It is easy to understand why you are so proud of your school as there are many things that make it special. Here are some of them:

- You have a good attitude towards school and you achieve good standards in your work.
- You clearly enjoy school and you behave very well indeed.
- All the staff are very mindful of the need to keep you safe and happy.
- Your teachers make a good team and they make sure that learning is fun and exciting.
- The staff provide a wide range of activities to keep you interested.
- Miss Varley and the staff are determined to make sure the school gets better and better.

You are very fortunate to be able to attend such a happy primary school. It is really important that you continue to work hard and make the most of the opportunities your school provides. There are a couple of ideas that should help it to become even better. First, we have asked Miss Varley to continue to work with the teachers to make sure lessons get better and better. Secondly, the school needs to provide you with more opportunities to use computers to help you to learn. We know that you can help the school to become even better by continuing to work hard.

We would like to wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Keith Edwards

Lead inspector