

# Mapledene Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134094
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	328825
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Merchant

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	310
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Elain Bowkett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anita McLaren
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 June 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Mapledene Road Sheldon Birmingham B26 3XE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01214 642881
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 464 6221

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 June 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than that seen nationally, as is the proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The Early Years Foundation Stage has one Nursery and two Reception classes. The school provides a wide range of extended services including a breakfast and after-school club.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Mapledene is a good school. It is moving in the right direction under the clear direction of its outstanding headteacher. She inspires and supports staff and pupils to get the best out of themselves and others so there is a very real sense of working together as a team. Pupils are rightly proud of their school. The overwhelming majority of parents have great confidence in the school and one summed up their views very well when saying, 'Mapledene is a wonderful school ... my children have blossomed since they have been there.'

When children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, their skills are below, and in some areas well below, those expected of their age. They make good progress because of the very strong focus on developing children's social skills and their ability to communicate with each other. Pupils continue to make good progress and standards at the end of Year 6 are average overall and are rising year on year. Extensive displays situated around the school demonstrate pupils' high abilities in art. Many pupils find higher-level writing skills very difficult. They need considerable time and support to explain orally how they reason, deduce and infer things from texts. This is a barrier to even more gaining high levels in their work.

Pupils achieve well not just because teaching and learning are good, but also because they are encouraged to see their potential and are given the self-confidence to work hard and 'aim high'. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, give clear explanations and plan their lessons well. They use questioning in lessons skilfully to promote learning, to analyse and improve pupils' performance, and to set challenging targets for individuals. However, teachers do not always give pupils sufficient time to work independently and to talk about their findings. This sometimes slows their learning.

Pupils' personal development is good and they behave outstandingly well. They come to school ready to learn and are eager to contribute to lessons. Pupils enjoy most aspects of school life, particularly the breakfast and after-school clubs, and enjoy using computers to help them learn. All pupils, at whatever level of ability or need, are well cared for, guided watchfully through the school and are happy learners. The above average attendance rate reflects pupils' strong enjoyment of school. They show a keen awareness of health and safety. Pupils clearly understand the importance of making healthy eating choices and taking regular exercise and choose to eat salad, fruit and other healthy options at lunchtimes. The Pupils are well prepared for the next phase of their education and beyond. A carefully planned and varied curriculum inspires pupils to work hard and gain a wide range of skills. They enjoy the trips and visits organised by the school and the wide range of after school clubs which are available. Teachers mark books and set targets for improvement carefully and regularly. Although pupils from all backgrounds work and play together well, their awareness of different cultures is not well developed. This is because the school has not fully evaluated how well it meets its requirements to promote community cohesion.

Governors involve themselves well in the life of the school and are supportive as well as challenging when they need to be. The school has good capacity to improve further, as improvement since the previous inspection has been good and the school accurately assesses and evaluates its work.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is below that expected, especially in language and literacy and in personal and social development. However, because the school helps them to settle into life in the Nursery quickly, progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. By the time they reach the end of the Reception class, most children are working securely towards the skills and abilities that are average for their age. Good teaching underpins this good progress. Staff provide a programme of activities carefully balanced between those led by adults and tasks children can choose for themselves. Core skills, including early sounds and words work are taught well through class and small group activities. Classrooms are attractive and stimulating and effective use is made of the beautifully appointed outside learning area. The personal development of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good with strong emphasis on encouraging independence and confidence and the ability to communicate effectively. However, staff do not always ask open-ended questions to present the children with the chance to express their ideas more fully. Safeguarding and welfare of children is paramount; parents are safe in the knowledge that their children's welfare has a very high priority and is of high quality. The coordinator provides good leadership and, with her dedicated team, plans stimulating activities that are well matched to the children's needs. Consequently, they thrive and learn in a secure, happy environment.

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

- Build on current planning to raise standards and achievement in English by providing more opportunities for pupils to develop higher level skills in writing.
- Provide greater opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness and understanding of pupils from other backgrounds.
- Ensure that all teaching becomes as good as the best by encouraging pupils to become more actively involved in their learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Results in national tests in 2008 showed that standards overall were broadly average and there was little difference between the various groups of learners. Pupils' work seen by inspectors, classroom observations of pupils' work and optional, nationally verified, tests carried out by the school confirm standards are securely average and improving steadily in both key stages. Secure and consistently implemented systems for checking the progress that pupils make and taking action to give support to pupils when needed have resulted in good progress for pupils throughout the school. The great majority of pupils are making well in excess of the expected progress of two National Curriculum sub-levels per year and are achieving well. The major factor holding back some pupils' achievement is the difficulty they have in explaining their ideas when they have read a text, which in turn inhibits their ability to write well. The school works effectively to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who enter the school with particularly low levels of attainment and they achieve as well as their peers.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school and are excited by all that it has to offer. This is reflected in their great enjoyment of learning, their good and improving attendance, and their keen involvement in a wide range of activities. Spiritual, moral, social and development is good so that by Year 6 pupils are mature, considerate, self-assured and responsible young people. Pupils report an absence of bullying and racism, feel safe and relish their involvement in many cultural activities. The focus on social skills starts very well in the Early Years Foundation Stage where children learn how to concentrate, listen, explore new things and work and play successfully with others. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives and careers. The school, through strong involvement in community projects and events such as singing at Sheldon Christmas lights and at the summer festival, helps to develop pupils' understanding of their local community and the part they play in it. Their contribution to and involvement in the life of their wider community, however, is more limited and many pupils have little awareness of the multicultural society in which we live. The well run breakfast and after-school clubs contribute well to pupils' personal development and well-being by helping them become independent and also to cooperate with their classmates.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Typically, teachers are knowledgeable and classrooms are well ordered and calm. Excellent relationships, mutual respect, humour and warmth underpin lessons. Teachers are good at telling pupils exactly what they need to do in lessons and this helps them make sense of their learning. In most lessons, pupils experience a range of approaches and this helps to sustain their interest, so that they quickly acquire new knowledge and skills. Sustained challenge and high expectations enable pupils to achieve well. Pupils learn best when the teaching is lively and when teachers clearly explain tasks and concepts. Carefully designed activities challenge the pupils to learn at a swift pace. In a small minority of lessons, teachers sometimes talk too much which limits the time pupils learn actively and independently. This results in slower progress and allows the pupils less time to explain what they have learnt. The school monitors and evaluates lessons rigorously and is beginning to link this to staff training so that the sharing of good practice is increasingly and celebrated.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The carefully planned curriculum contributes strongly to pupils' learning. The school increasingly ensures that learning is meaningful and fun because it carefully and imaginatively plans themes with strong links between subjects. Provision for information and communication technology across subjects is good and makes a strong contribution to pupils' good achievement. An excellent focus on using visits widens pupils' life experiences. The school provides pupils with a wide variety of sporting activities as part of the school day. These, together with well supported creative and educational activities outside the normal school day and the effectively led after-school club, make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, levels of enjoyment and their personal and emotional development. Good use is made of outside providers to extend the range of sports and music offered to pupils and to provide an after-school club. The school

recognises that the curriculum does too little to develop in pupils meaningful awareness and understanding of how other people live.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good because of the high level of commitment from all staff, which ensures pupils' well-being is promoted well. Arrangements for health and safety are thorough. Procedures for safeguarding pupils' welfare are robust and regularly reviewed. The school's very good systems for promoting behaviour ensure that pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. The school works well with other agencies to maximise pupils' achievement and has successfully worked with parents to improve attendance and punctuality. Academic guidance is a growing strength. Identification of vulnerable learners and those at risk of underachieving takes place early and highly effective strategies support them. Careful monitoring enables these pupils to reach their challenging targets. Marking is thorough and rigorously monitored by the headteacher. Pupils know their targets but there is variability in the comments teachers write on how pupils may improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good leadership and management are at the heart of the school's success because leaders have effectively focused the staff on raising standards and meeting pupils' needs. The headteacher works tenaciously to improve pupils' educational opportunities. She communicates her high expectations persuasively to staff so that all have a shared sense of direction and feel part of a successful team. Leaders have a true understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a clear strategy for bringing about future improvement. They are quick to recognise and praise the good work of staff and pupils and are alert to situations where people need more advice and guidance. As a result, a climate has been created where everyone is trying hard to make the school even better, teamwork is strong, staff morale is high and pupils' progress accelerating. Middle management is good and improving. Most middle managers are new to their responsibility but are enthusiastically grasping what they need to do to fulfil their roles effectively. School governance is good. The governors are committed and astute and fulfil their roles well. However, because of the limited extent to which pupils are encouraged to become involved in the wider community and with others from different ethnic groups and cultures, community cohesion is not well enough developed and is satisfactory.





## 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 <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

26 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mapledene Primary School, Birmingham, B26 3XE

I should like to thank all of you very much for the kindness and consideration you showed to my colleagues and I when we came to visit your school recently. We really enjoyed ourselves. Mapledene Primary is a good school. You told us many interesting things about your school, which was very helpful. I would like to say a special thank you to the school council and those of you from Years 5 and 6 who gave up part of your lunchtime in order to meet us.

Here are some of the good things about your school.

- Your behaviour is excellent and you get on very well with your fellow pupils. Mapledene is a well ordered school and you look after each other well.
- Teaching is good and sometimes excellent and your teachers are very concerned to make sure that you do as well as you can.
- By the time you are in Year 6, you reach standards that are similar to those of pupils in other schools and you make good progress in your lessons.
- You learn lots about keeping yourselves safe and leading a healthy lifestyle.
- Your headteacher does a fantastic job and she and the other senior staff know exactly how to make Mapledene Primary School even better. Even in a good school like yours, there are things to be done. We have asked that your school work with you to make your writing skills even better. We have also asked that in some lessons you are able to learn more things on your own and then be able to talk about what you have found out. Finally, we have asked the school to make sure that you learn more about the beliefs and ways of life of people who come from different backgrounds from yourselves. I hope that you all continue to do well at Mapledene Primary.

Yours faithfully

Michael Merchant

Lead inspector