

Maidenbower Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125962
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	340881
Inspection dates	17–18 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Marion Wallace

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	269
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lee Hammond
Headteacher	Allison Collins
Date of previous school inspection	0 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at school development plans, governors' minutes, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 84 parental questionnaires were received and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- effectiveness of strategies to maintain high standards, progress and achievement throughout the school for all groups of pupils
- standards and achievement in 2009 test results
- progress of pupils who do not speak English as their first language
- progress and support for pupils with a statement of special educational needs and at the School Action Plus level of support for pupils.

Information about the school

Maidenbower is bigger than most infant schools. Most pupils come from the immediate area and adjoining neighbourhood. The majority of pupils are White British. Few pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is average. The major groups of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are School Action. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for a Nursery and three Reception classes. There are three classes in each of Years 1 and 2. The school has achieved the Healthy School Award, Activemark and Dyslexia Friendly School Award.

At the time of the inspection two senior leaders were on maternity leave.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Maidenbower is an outstanding school. Different groups, and pupils of varying abilities, achieve extremely well. The school has maintained high levels of attainment, progress and achievement over the last five years because teachers create an exciting atmosphere in which children learn. Parents and pupils appreciate the high quality care and exciting learning opportunities. One parent summed up the views of the vast majority by saying, 'The school is fantastic! Children are extremely happy and they make excellent progress; all teachers create a wonderful atmosphere for children to learn; they love coming to school.'

These are the key strengths of the school.

- The school's ethos is extremely warm and welcoming, relationships are excellent, and pupils make outstanding gains in their personal development.
- The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good.
- Pupils' attainment, progress and achievement are excellent.
- Pupils and parents appreciate the excellent relationships with the school.
- Care, guidance and support are extremely strong, with the result that pupils behave superbly well and are sensible and enthusiastic learners.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding and pupils develop an extremely positive attitude to their learning because lessons are challenging, fun and extend learning extremely well.
- Superb links between subjects help make learning relevant and interesting.
- The headteacher and senior management team lead the school exceptionally well and have an extremely clear vision for its future improvement.

The success of the school is due to the effectiveness of the headteacher, governors and senior management team, who provide extremely clear educational direction. They lead the school exceptionally well and this high quality is reflected in the very strong commitment from all staff to providing each pupil with the best possible education. The school's excellent organisation, strong shared vision and impressive track record of maintaining high standards over time demonstrate its outstanding capacity to continue moving forward. Despite recent changes in senior management, the school has maintained very high standards and quality. The rigorous systems for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the school are playing their part in maintaining high levels and standards, and in driving the school forward. The work done since the last inspection and the consistently high standards again demonstrate the school's excellent capacity to continue to improve. Child protection, risk assessment and safeguarding procedures meet current statutory requirements.

Key weaknesses which remain are:

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- Opportunities to challenge more able children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are sometimes missed, and their progress slows.
- Pupils' awareness of the local and national communities is not as well developed as their awareness of the school and the global communities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the school's involvement in the wider community and nationally so that pupils have more opportunities to appreciate the range of cultures and backgrounds of people living in Britain.
- Ensure that more able children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve the levels they are capable of in reading and writing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning because lessons are extremely well organised and excellent relationships contribute to a very positive climate for learning. In a Year 1 science lesson, there was a buzz of excitement at the prospect of discovering ways to learn more about hearing. Year 2 pupils enthusiastically shared their learning when talking knowledgeably with others about Australian history, climate, culture, art and geographical differences.

Achievement is excellent overall, including for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The quality of learning is excellent. Attainment is excellent and reflects consistently high and challenging expectations. In a Year 2 gymnastics lesson, pupils made rapid gains in their learning to explore, select, refine and produce a short balance sequence. The quality of their movement continually improved because they were challenged to observe and evaluate their performance and to identify strong aspects and also areas for improvement. Not a moment was lost as pupils evaluated personal reactions to the content and quality of the movements. This helped them all improve the quality of their own performance and composition. The school's tracking and inspection evidence indicates continuous improvement for all groups of pupils in 2009, with the vast majority of pupils reaching or exceeding their targets and more pupils working at higher levels. Examination of pupils' work shows that the quality of reading, mathematics, key writing skills, presentation and handwriting, and the development of a rich range of vocabulary, is consistent throughout the school, which contribute significantly to pupils' future economic well-being. Pupils start in Year 1 with standards slightly above expected levels and make excellent progress. Continued outstanding progress enables pupils to reach standards well above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 because of extremely strong and effective teaching.

Other key features of pupils' outcomes are:

Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and good cultural awareness contributes extremely well to the strong sense of community within the school. Relationships are exceptionally strong and, consequently, attitudes are extremely positive and behaviour excellent. Through developing their thinking skills, pupils learn to reflect on their world

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and to consider issues facing future generations. For example, Year 2 pupils talked with real concern about world pollution and climate change and their effect on animals such as polar bears. Year 2 pupils demonstrate mature responsibility in their role as 'playground angels'. The school's promotion of community cohesion is good, and pupils have a good awareness of other cultures, ethnicities and religions. They learn to make a very strong contribution to their school and global communities, but their knowledge of and contribution to the local and national community are less well developed.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Extremely strong relationships and excellent attitudes and behaviour contribute to a positive climate for learning. Lessons are frequently vibrant and based on a rich and rewarding curriculum. They are extremely well planned and take good account of pupils' different abilities. Teachers use a range of methods skilfully, such as electronic whiteboards, superbly well to reinforce, introduce, extend and involve pupils in their own learning. 'Talking partners' are used extremely well to help pupils to articulate and share their ideas. Year 2 pupils learn how to solve number problems by sharing their

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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ideas with a partner. Standards are consistently high throughout the school because pupils are encouraged to take pride in their work and to identify and to know their targets. Pupils with additional learning needs are extremely well supported by teaching assistants, and so make excellent progress. Marking is exemplary, greatly helps to guide and challenge pupils, and is extremely thorough. Such high quality academic guidance successfully ensures pupils know what to do to improve their work.

The curriculum is exciting, creative and active, and enables pupils to make excellent progress in their learning. It is extremely well planned to meet the needs of individuals and groups and links the skills and knowledge of different subjects well. It gives pupils stimulating experiences which promote their spiritual, moral and social development and good cultural development. The school uses writers, artists and dancers to heighten enjoyment and promote learning, for example, when learning about Australia, Year 2 children showed sheer delight in recalling information they had learned and planning how to research to find more knowledge. The application of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology is highly appropriate. Opportunities for writing are skilfully woven into exciting themes such as 'Wild and wonderful' and 'Amazing Oz'. Pupils are enthusiastic to learn. One group said, 'We love learning ' it is all fun.' Personal, social and health education successfully supports the outstanding personal development. The excellent range of extra-curricular activities, clubs, visitors and visits helps pupils develop confidence and self-esteem and to develop new interests and skills, for example, after-school activities, such as Yoga Bugs, are well attended.

The extremely caring ethos results in very happy pupils who thoroughly enjoy school life. Pupils' needs are central to the work of the school and all adults effectively help children and parents to get the best from learning. The school works extremely well with parents and external support agencies. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive excellent support. The support provided to help all pupils get the best out of their learning ensures vulnerable children achieve as well as the others. Excellent behaviour is promoted consistently by all members of staff. Parents appreciate the home-school links. Home-school contract books are very well used and parents say that the regular parents' drop-in sessions provide excellent opportunities for them to ask questions. Transition arrangements for children entering and moving on to other schools are excellent.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

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Leaders communicate ambition very effectively, and have a very thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The monitoring of pupils' progress throughout the school is exemplary and highlights any areas of weakness, leading to improvement. The headteacher has an accurate view of teaching and is dedicated to making sure pupils do exceptionally well and that staff bring high quality to their work. She leads the school with great expertise and compassion, valuing the work of others and encouraging them to take responsibility. Staff carry out their duties conscientiously and make sure they contribute fully to the high standards and achievement. A significant number of parents commented on the excellent school and outstanding progress achieved by a dedicated and committed staff. The headteacher is well supported and challenged by an excellent governing body, who monitor and evaluate the work of the school very effectively. Tracking of achievement over time has been extremely thorough and senior leaders quickly identify any dips and swiftly put sensible strategies and interventions in place to promote improvement. The promotion of community cohesion is good because pupils develop a very thorough understanding of the school and global community for their age. Promotion of the local and national community is less well developed.

The school promotes equalities expertly, as reflected in the profile of achievement across ability groups. All safeguarding procedures and checks on adults are robust. Appropriate developmental areas to improve the effectiveness of the school still further are clearly identified in the school improvement plan. Excellent partnership links with local schools, parents and support agencies contribute to the school's outstanding provision. The school deploys its resources very well, particularly to improve provision for pupils who need extra support and intervention.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Excellent pre-school links with parents ensure that children settle extremely well into school life. Younger children in the Nursery get off to a flying start in their learning, particularly in developing their independence and confidence. Nursery staff are skilled in providing a wide range of high-quality activities both indoors and outdoors. They challenge children to make choices and develop their own ideas, for example, a child in the play house was ironing and packing away clothes and also following a story from a book. Transition to Reception is very smooth and most children enter Reception class at the expected levels for their age. They make good progress and, by the time they enter Year 1, almost all attain the goals expected for their age and exceed the goals in personal, social and emotional development. Their communication and language skills are well developed through role play and they use their imagination in allocating roles for the doctor's surgery. In writing and reading, however, not enough children attain the highest levels because opportunities to challenge more able children are sometimes missed. The outdoor learning environment is used well to stimulate learning, and activities excite and interest the children. Teaching is good. All activities are carefully planned with opportunities to learn through activities led by adults and those they choose for themselves. Care and welfare, and induction and transition, are excellent and contribute to children's positive achievement. The provision is well led and managed. The leader is new to her role and is introducing new systems such as the 'learning journal'.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A large majority of parents are satisfied with the school. Parents regard the school as happy, welcoming and friendly. They say their children really enjoy attending the school and that they make excellent progress. Parents regard the school as extremely caring and supportive and say the staff are approachable.

They identify strengths of the school as: the activities, relationships with staff, the excellent start children receive in the Nursery, the school ethos and the pupils' enjoyment. There were very few parental criticisms. The very small number were mainly concerned with lack of information about the progress their children are making,

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behaviour in the playground and a slow response to parental concerns. All issues raised in the questionnaires were discussed with the headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Maidenbower Infants to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 84 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 269 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	67	23	27	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	57	68	24	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	40	36	43	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	48	37	44	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	52	62	27	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	49	39	46	1	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	50	34	40	3	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	35	42	30	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	42	28	34	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	34	35	42	2	2	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	31	35	42	2	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	36	43	26	31	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	50	60	17	20	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Maidenbower Infant School, Crawley, RH10 7RA

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and your teachers. We will remember how extremely polite and considerate you all were and how beautifully you all behaved. You and your parents told us that Maidenbower is an excellent school and we agree.

These are the things we found that your school does well.

- You get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception and make excellent progress through the school. As a result, you reach well above average standards by the end of Year 2 because teaching is excellent.
- You all enjoy learning immensely and your attendance is above average.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you are extremely sensible and know how to keep safe.
- You greatly enjoy and benefit from the many fun activities, clubs, visits and visitors.
- Your school cares for you extremely well and teaches you a lot about how to be healthy and to care for others. Your playground angels are very responsible and perform their job extremely well.
- Your school council is well organised and is working very well with your teachers to make sure that your school continues to improve.
- Your headteacher, senior teachers and governors lead the school exceptionally well and all the staff work very effectively to make sure that Maidenbower is an exciting, fun place to learn.

We have asked your school to develop wider links with the local community and nationally so that you have more opportunities to appreciate a wider range of cultures and different backgrounds; and also to ensure that children who find the work easy in the Early Years Foundation Stage are challenged more in their reading and writing.

Thank you for a very enjoyable and memorable visit to your school and best wishes for your future.

Yours faithfully

Marion Wallace

Lead inspector

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