

# Maplefields School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131186
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	341105
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 December 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jeffery Plumb

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	74
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Christopher Jervis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lynda Morgan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	School Place Gainsborough Road Corby
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of the governing body, the school's social worker, staff focus groups and members of the senior leadership team. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of evidence, including the data on pupils' progress, attendance information and exclusion records. They also examined pupils' behaviour plans, risk assessments, school safeguarding policies and the action plan for community cohesion. The school development plan and curriculum documents were evaluated and pupils' files and their work were looked at. Ten parent questionnaires were analysed. Inspectors spent time looking at the transport arrangements at the end of the day.

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

- pupil progress over time by scrutinising the data held by the school
- the attendance data, particularly the analysis around pupils with poor attendance, and the school's strategies to improve attendance
- the school's strategies to improve pupils' behaviour, confidence and self-esteem
- the school's strategy to promote community cohesion

## Information about the school

Maplefields School provides for pupils with severe behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. All pupils have a statement for their special educational needs. The school has changed its character since the time of the last inspection when it made provision for primary aged pupils. In April 2007, it merged with a secondary school, which made provision for pupils with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. Provision for pupils is currently made on three different sites and, in addition, a proportion of pupils in Years 10 and 11 attend local colleges as part of their educational programme. There is a plan to provide for all pupils in one new purpose school building from September 2011. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds and none come from families where English is not the home language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is significantly above the national average. There are nine looked after pupils and boys considerably outnumber girls. The majority of pupils come from north Northamptonshire, but a few travel long distances from Leicester and Rutland.

**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

Maplefields School provides an outstanding quality of education. Each pupil, no matter how disaffected with learning on entry to the school, is viewed as a person with the potential to learn and succeed. A totally dedicated education staff and a wide range of support agencies work in an outstandingly effective partnership. This has the effect of removing the barriers to learning for pupils related to their emotional and behavioural difficulties and equipping them to become confident and independent learners. As pupils gain confidence and their self-esteem improves they begin to believe in themselves again. The vast majority engage with learning and achieve amazing academic success measured against their low starting points. They become mature young people who make a valuable difference in their school community. Parents say, 'Our children flourish at this school'.

Pupils make outstanding progress because of the nurturing, caring and challenging learning environment within this school. Flexible planning enables pupils to experience curriculum programmes, which they view as relevant and this motivates them to learn. Since the merger, when attendance took a down turn, it has improved very significantly each year due the effective strategies put in place by the school. However, there are still just a few pupils with a poor attendance record which impacts adversely on their learning. Teaching in most lessons sparkles and successfully engages pupils' interest and so accelerates their learning. The magical ingredient in the outstandingly successful teaching is the meticulous matching of assessment of what pupils need to learn to relevant activities to enable that learning to take place. For example, in an outstanding Year 6 mathematics lesson, a dynamic start fully grasped the interest of each pupil. The teacher then gave each pupil a task based on a highly accurate assessment of what they needed to learn. By the end of the lesson each pupil made outstanding progress measured against their planned learning outcomes related to data handling and graph work.

Analysis of the school's performance in every aspect of its work is thorough, detailed and evidence based. The headteacher provides exceptional leadership. Deeply reflective and passionate that every pupil will realise her or his full potential, the headteacher ensures that the views of pupils, parents and carers, governors and staff feed actions for improvement. Pupils say that their involvement in important decisions about their education and the way their school is run helps them to take on responsibility and contributes very significantly to their improved behaviour. Decisive actions following robust self-evaluation result in significant improvements. For example, having recently identified a group of pupils in Key Stage 4 who were beginning to lose interest in school an alternative curriculum was designed to better meet their needs. This curriculum has

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improved their attendance, increased their motivation to learn and raised their achievement. Given the success of actions to raise pupil achievement and improve behaviour since the merger, the capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding, as is the value for money.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve attendance, particularly of those very few pupils who are persistently absent from school, so as to raise their achievement.

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

All groups of pupils make outstanding progress in learning in lessons. Attainment on entry is variable, but most pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge in key areas of learning when they join the school. This is because they have been unsettled emotionally and often missed much schooling previously. Consequently, most enter with low attainment. Pupils are tested to establish what gaps they have for their age in English and mathematics. Teachers then use this information in their planning exceptionally well to support each pupil in plugging those gaps and so each pupil makes outstanding progress. The school's tracking data show just how successful the school is in enabling the vast majority of pupils to make good the learning they have missed and their progress in reading, writing and mathematics is outstanding. The vast majority of pupils exceed their challenging annual targets. From pupils' starting points on entry, the vast majority of pupils reach broadly average standards by the time they leave school. Those with additional special educational needs and/or disabilities are given targeted, extra support and make rapid gains with their reading and spelling. Specific programmes for the few girls on roll grasp their interest and so accelerate their learning. By the end of Key Stage 4, Entry Level qualifications and GCSE passes in a wide range of subjects, measured against pupils' starting points, are very good. In art, physical education and mathematics, pupils excel in GCSE and a few reach standards above the national average. Pupils also successfully achieve nationally recognised accreditation in a wide range of vocational subjects. By the time they move on to further education colleges, the vast majority of pupils are very well equipped for their next steps of learning.

Overwhelmingly, pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. Behaviour is good. This is a credit to the successful implementation of the school's behaviour management strategies, as provision is made for pupils with very challenging behaviours. Pupils told inspectors they feel safe at school and have trusted adults they can talk with about any concerns they may have. They have a good understanding of the need to take regular exercise and the importance of choosing healthy food options. They learn how to open and manage a bank account and develop important life skills such as making a computer presentation to an audience. Through a wide range of opportunities, such as being buddies and visiting elderly citizens in a local care home pupils make a positive contribution to the community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The vast majority of pupils maturely reflect about things

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they do wrong, work them through and apologise. Their reflective writing on such occasions is very moving as they become determined to have a better attitude.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Overwhelmingly, the majority of lessons are exceptionally well planned. Activities are matched so well to pupils' needs so as to rapidly accelerate their learning. Teachers very skilfully use dynamic starts to the beginning of lessons to get pupils' attention and engage them in learning. Then they set them off to complete a range of exciting and interesting activities based on what they need to learn. Almost consistently across the whole school, pupils at the end of lessons evaluate the success in their learning. Learning assistants make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning as well as supporting them to behave well. Expectations are high and teachers use challenging questions to extend pupils' learning. Relationships are a significant strong feature and, consequently, pupils are not afraid to make mistakes and develop the confidence and skills to self-correct and move on with their learning. Based on excellent subject knowledge, the teaching of art and physical education is consistently outstanding and

<sup>1</sup> 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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contributes to the exceptional learning and high achievement of pupils in these subjects. On rare occasions, teachers talk for far too long in lessons and on these occasions the pace of learning is slowed.

Flexible, but extremely well focused planning, lies at the heart of the outstandingly successful curriculum. The whole staff team 'think outside of the box' and plan to ensure that the curriculum meets the emotional and academic needs of the pupils. A programme targeted at disaffected pupils has paid great dividends in ensuring they attend school regularly and has significantly improved their confidence, life skills and academic achievement. 'Girl-friendly' modules ensure that girls, who are in a very significant minority in this school, are engaged in relevant learning and so achieve well. Therapy, particularly in addressing very complex emotional needs, is integral to the curriculum and this makes a very valuable contribution to improving how pupils feel about themselves. As pupils begin to feel positive the vast majority take off with their learning and often do as well as their peers in mainstream schools. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 access vocational courses at college where they are fully and confidently included with pupils from mainstream schools. Residential opportunities are planned to develop pupils social and team building skills and they are very successful in achieving this aim.

Very effective communication and working between educational staff, health professionals, social services and the youth offending team ensure that the care needs of the pupils are exceptionally well met. The social worker employed by the school is a pillar of strength in supporting pupils and their families. He very successfully facilitates an exciting programme of workshops to support parents and carers in helping their children with their emotional and behavioural difficulties and also to enhance their learning. Induction of pupils into the school is outstanding and they are well supported by peer buddies. An external careers adviser offers outstanding support for pupils when they move on to further education colleges.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and the dedicated staff team, in partnership with the governors, have an exceptionally clear vision. This focuses on turning the lives around for pupils who struggle to access education because of a range of difficult circumstances in their lives. This vision is clearly realised in practice; the vast majority of pupils, who often join the

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school lacking in confidence, leave with good qualifications and an opportunity to succeed in life. Senior and middle managers are clear that the focus of their work is to improve learning for pupils. They regularly think and reflect with each other on how they can improve their teaching so that it is the very best. Equality of opportunity for all is a core value which pervades all activities in this school; this results in each pupil's individual needs being exceptionally well met. All pupils are treated with the utmost dignity and respect. Very effective procedures and management systems are in place to ensure pupils are safe and secure. At the time of the inspection, child protection procedures met government regulations. Risk assessments, including pupils' behaviour, are very thorough and detailed.

Partnerships with local businesses are very effective and used to fund project-based learning. There are detailed plans in place to launch a number of enterprise projects to equip pupils with the skills required in setting up and running a business. Outreach work into partner mainstream schools is outstanding and supports mainstream teachers in working with pupils at risk of exclusion. This work has reduced the number of exclusions within the partnership schools. A thorough audit has been carried out, and a detailed action plan has been drawn up, to promote community cohesion. The impact of the plan is good, particularly within the local and national communities. Governance is outstanding. The committee structure ensures that there are excellent systems in place to ensure that all statutory responsibilities are met. The highly skilled governing body strikes an excellent balance between support and challenge and asks searching questions of the senior leadership team. Governors are fully involved in all decision making and action planning and work with total commitment to ensure the very best provision for the pupils.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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



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## **Views of parents and carers**

Returns of the Ofsted questionnaire indicate that parents and carers are very pleased with what the school achieves for their children. Their views are exemplified by the comments: 'I think the school is fantastic!!! It is perfect for my child....they foster the "caring" ethos throughout the curriculum and social events' and 'I think that if all schools were like Maplefields all our children would be in for a good start in life'. Inspectors agree with parents' views and evidence supports that they have every reason to be proud of what their children achieve at school. Inspectors found that through its social work activities, the school works very closely with parents and carers to help them support their children to engage again with learning and make a success of their lives.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Maplefields School 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 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 10 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 74 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	8	80	1	10	0	0	1	10
The school keeps my child safe	6	60	4	40	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	7	70	2	20	0	0	1	10
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	70	3	30	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	7	70	3	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	70	2	20	0	0	1	10
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	80	2	20	0	0	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)	6	60	1	10	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	70	2	20	0	0	1	10
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	70	2	20	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	70	2	20	0	0	1	10
The school is led and managed effectively	8	80	2	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	9	90	0	0	1	10	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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



17 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Maplefields School, Corby, NN18 0QP

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your outstanding school. We think that Maplefields is a great place to be and we wish to thank all of you who took the time to talk with us about life at your school. You came across as mature young people with clear aspirations about what you want to achieve with your lives.

Here are the main points we found.

Your school is outstanding and provides you with lots of very interesting and exciting things to do, both within school and in the wider community.

You achieve exceptionally well in English, mathematics, art and physical education.

The teaching and care you receive are excellent.

Your behaviour is good and very significantly better than what it was in your previous schools.

You are happy, confident and your self-esteem is very good.

Your headteacher is amazing. She and her dedicated team of staff do everything they can to help you succeed and to make something worthwhile of your lives.

Your opportunities to gain awards, including those for acquiring vocational qualifications, are very good.

To support your outstanding school to become even better, I have asked your teachers and you to do everything to ensure that you all attend school regularly so that every one of you can achieve your very best.

Thank you once again for your help during this inspection. We felt privileged to meet you.

Yours sincerely

Jeff Plumb

Lead inspector

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