

# Mayplace Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	101417
<b>Local authority</b>	Bexley
<b>Inspection number</b>	376559
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Helen Hutchings

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	470
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pat Riddle
<b>Headteacher</b>	Judith Pemberton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7–8 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	Woodside Road Barnehurst Bexley DA7 6EQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01322 523256
<b>Fax number</b>	01322 551924
<b>Email address</b>	admin@mayplace.bexley.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	8–9 February 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	376559



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Helen Hutchings

Additional inspector

Andrew Lyons

Additional inspector

Nicholas Wollaston

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed different aspects of the school's work including 24 lessons involving 17 teachers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, and looked at documents including those relating to safeguarding, pupils' assessment information and pupils' work. They held discussions with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils, and analysed questionnaires from 116 parents and carers, as well as those completed by a sample of staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

Most pupils in this larger than average primary school are from White British backgrounds, and few speak English as an additional language. While below average, the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has doubled in three years. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average, but the proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is above average because most pupils in the newly opened specialist provision for pupils with autism hold a statement. Six pupils, including two children of pre-school age, are currently registered within the provision. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Nursery and two Reception classes. A breakfast club is attended by around 20 children daily. An after-school club on site is run by an outside provider and is subject to a separate Ofsted inspection. In recent years, the school has been through a period of turbulence with significant staff changes, many at short notice because of serious illness. The school holds a number of awards, including Healthy School, Eco-School and curriculum innovation awards. The school meets current floor standards.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- Mayplace is a satisfactory and improving school. Throughout a period of significant turbulence, the school has ensured that pupils’ attainment at the end of Year 6 remained in line with national averages. However, while some aspects of pupils’ outcomes are good, others require further improvement.
- The school’s sense of community is largely due to pupils’ good attitudes, behaviour and enjoyment of school. Pupils clearly feel safe at school. One parent rightly commented, ‘My children are very happy at Mayplace. Teachers are very caring and helpful to both children and parents.’
- In recent years, pupils’ progress has been variable between year groups, but focused teaching and additional support in upper Key Stage 2 meant that pupils made up for earlier underachievement so that their progress was satisfactory overall. Pupils’ achievement is now satisfactory throughout the school.
- The refurbished nursery and reception facilities are used well and children have a good start to school. This is making an important contribution to raising attainment through the school as children’s attainment by the end of Reception Year has improved steadily and they are better prepared for Year 1. Particular gains are made in children’s language development, providing them with a firm platform for later learning.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall because the good teaching evident in many lessons is not consistent across the school. This is largely because some less experienced teachers are still developing their skills.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have managed staffing changes well to minimise disruption to pupils’ learning. Systems for monitoring and developing practice across the school are good, having been strengthened, and as a result teaching is improving rapidly. Attendance has improved well and is above average. The success with which the school has improved pupils’ writing skills demonstrates its capacity to implement successfully its next priority to improve mathematics skills.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Build on the good practice already within the school to improve the consistency of good teaching so that pupils' progress is accelerated and attainment by the end of Year 6 is raised, by ensuring that:
  - the success criteria identified for pupils' learning always accurately identifies the steps to be achieved during the lesson
  - questioning is always used effectively to probe pupils' understanding and knowledge and to move them on in their learning
  - all activities in guided reading sessions effectively promote pupils' reading and comprehension skills.
- Implement the plan to review and develop the approaches to teaching mathematics.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils develop positive attitudes to learning, shown in the good presentation of their work. They take a pride in their achievements. Because marking gives them good guidance on how to improve and encourages them to follow up on the suggestions made, pupils have a good understanding of their next steps for learning and how to improve. Most pupils sustain their concentration well throughout each lesson, and this is particularly the case in the older classes. For example, in a challenging information and communication technology lesson, pupils worked collaboratively to apply and evaluate the impact of animation on their presentations on what they had learned about ancient Egypt; pupils showed sensitivity in commenting on one another's work and in suggesting ways it could be improved.

Pupils make satisfactory progress from starting points in Nursery and Reception Years that are generally below those expected for their age, particularly in children's communication skills. The richly resourced outdoor area gives children exciting opportunities to develop their skills through play and conversation with one another and with adults, so that their attainment as they join Year 1 is in line with the expected levels for their age. The regular and skilled teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) in Reception Year and Key Stage 1 has a positive impact on children's early literacy skills. The teaching of reading is embedded well into the school's curriculum, through daily phonics or reading lessons. However, in a few guided reading sessions in Key Stage 2, pupils do not make enough progress in developing their reading skills because some tasks lack challenge, particularly those carried out independently. Most whole-class literacy lessons effectively develop pupils' writing skills. For example, Year 6 pupils developed their understanding of poetry and developed insights into social issues when writing their own lyrics to the music of John Lennon's

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'Imagine'; the teachers had high expectations of what pupils could achieve, particularly in developing the vocabulary of higher attaining pupils and pupils rose to the challenge. In most lessons, pupils are encouraged to talk through their ideas with one another before writing, and the school's data show an improvement in writing through the school. There are many opportunities for pupils to use and apply basic skills across the curriculum, especially in writing, where pupils are given particularly purposeful writing activities within the context of history. Opportunities to use mathematics skills in other subjects are less well developed. Attainment in English and mathematics in the Year 6 tests is in line with national averages.

Almost all parents and carers are pleased with their child's progress, although a few indicated their concern that progress had not been even as their child moved through the school. Pupils in each year group are now making satisfactory progress across all aspects of their learning, and in some classes, including in Year 6, progress is good. There is no significant difference in the achievement of different groups. Since the last inspection, the school has gradually closed the gap between the performance of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and that of other pupils. Pupils in the provision for those with autism make good progress in their learning and social development because of the experienced specialist support they receive. Other pupils also gain from this facility; for example, sometimes pupils with language difficulties use the sensory room to develop subject vocabulary in preparation for lessons with the whole class. Specific support given to pupils needing extra help, such as with reading, is effective in enabling those pupils to develop both reading skills and strategies and increase their confidence in reading. The gap between girls' and boys' attainment is closing, especially in writing, because of the effective emphasis placed on making learning interesting and inspiring boys to read more.

**Quality of teaching**

Although teaching is not consistently good across the school while teachers develop their expertise, there are no significant weaknesses and the teaching of English and mathematics is sound. Parents and carers express their confidence in the school's teaching in their responses to the inspection questionnaire. Teachers consistently explain the intended learning clearly, with success criteria explicitly shared with pupils at the outset and referred to at later stages in the lesson to keep pupils on track. In a few lessons, the success criteria are too broad and do not identify the most important small steps to be taken through the lesson. Teachers plan lessons which cater for pupils' wide-ranging needs, and increasingly provide additional challenge for the most able pupils, shown in the growing proportion of pupils working at higher levels. Such initiatives have a positive impact on the quality of the curriculum on offer. However, in a few mathematics lessons, teachers introduce more than one concept at a time, which effectively challenges the most able pupils, but slows the progress of less able pupils because they do not consolidate one idea before having to consider another.

Teachers have clear expectations of pupils' behaviour so that learning moves forward

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quickly, although in a few lessons some pupils are slow to begin their independent tasks without prompting by an adult. This happens particularly when pupils find the task difficult and do not have the confidence to try things out for themselves. Teaching assistants are well briefed about their role in each lesson and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, by providing encouragement and explaining tasks to individuals and small groups. Often teachers give pupils time to talk through their ideas at length and use questioning effectively to check understanding in whole-class sessions. This really enhances pupils learning and understanding. However, on occasion questioning is superficial and does not sufficiently probe pupils' knowledge and understanding to promote deep reflection about the learning taking place. Staff deal sympathetically with pupils' emotional and social needs, which promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning as a result of the concentrated effort, particularly in the early years of school, in enabling pupils to gain the necessary skills to become good learners. A small minority of parents indicated that they believe lessons are disrupted because of unacceptable behaviour, but pupils spoken with indicate that this is very rare and is supported by the school's log of behaviour incidents. The school deals well with any incidents of bullying and has been imaginative in challenging any form of unacceptable behaviour. For example, a few pupils who have previously found it difficult to meet the school's expectations have effectively been encouraged to develop their social skills and confidence by becoming involved in activities which support others. Pupils and their parents and carers are confident that pupils are safe in school. Pupils learned much about safety during the extensive refurbishment and building programme which required them to play in more crowded surroundings without all the equipment they had previously enjoyed. This understanding has been promoted further when the school council researched and presented its ideas for an all-weather playground area. The school has taken robust action to challenge families whose children were persistently absent. Pupils respond well to house point awards for good attendance and, as a result, attendance has improved significantly and is now above average.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body have high expectations of what pupils at the school are capable of achieving, shown in the robust action taken to minimise disruption to pupils' learning during a time of significant staff changes. Now that the staff team has been stabilised and improvements already secured, morale and confidence are high. For example, as a result of improved analysis of pupils' performance and the wide range of additional support provided when individuals or groups are not making the expected progress, the gaps in attainment are closing rapidly. Opportunities for groups of pupils are similar and there is no discrimination. Self-evaluation is accurate, including the next identified priority to review and develop approaches to the teaching of mathematics.

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Teachers value the balance of support and challenge for their work, and the opportunities to share experiences with staff from a group of five schools working closely together. Lesson study groups within the school have been well received by staff, who see this as a valuable activity for improvement and the dissemination of good practice. Consequently, satisfactory teaching is steadily becoming good. The school's involvement in a project to link subjects has resulted in a rich curriculum which interests pupils and supports teachers in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils' everyday learning is greatly enhanced by a wide range of activities, including visits, visitors and extra-curricular clubs.

The partnership with parents and carers is strong, with most individual concerns raised in the questionnaire relating to the past. Parents and carers have good opportunities to discuss pupils' progress with teachers, for example in the termly updating of the home-school learning agreement which renews pupils' targets and helps parents to understand what they can do to help learning at home. The school ensures a high priority is given to safeguarding pupils, including arrangements relating to child protection. As a result of the building project, site security has been improved with separate vehicular and pedestrian access.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



10 February 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Mayplace Primary School, Barnehurst DA7 6EQ**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us recently when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing you at work in lessons. We have judged that Mayplace is a satisfactory school and we can see that it is improving rapidly. As we promised some of you, I am including the main points of our report below.

- Children get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception and enjoy their new facilities, particularly their outdoor area which helps them to learn in all weathers.
- We agree that your behaviour is good and this helps you to feel safe around the school and make progress in lessons because you can concentrate well. Your attendance has improved over the last couple of years and this also helps you to do well.
- The headteacher and staff work hard to improve your school and to make learning interesting. You told us about how well your teachers help you to understand the quality of your work and what you have to do to make it better. We have asked them to share with each other how you learn best. In particular, we have asked them to make sure that you are always clear about the lesson success criteria and that all your tasks in guided reading help you to improve your reading and comprehension skills.
- Because you have good opportunities to talk through your ideas before writing, your writing skills have improved. Teachers are now planning to review which approaches best help you to learn in mathematics, and you can help by sharing your ideas with them.

Finally, we hope that you continue to work hard and make the best possible progress. Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings  
Lead inspector

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