

# Mabel Prichard School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123339
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	359415
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anne Wright

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 special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	67
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Maureen Hewlett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Wallington
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 April 2008
<b>School address</b>	Cuddesdon Way Oxfordshire OX4 6SB
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 13 lessons taught by nine teachers and dropped in briefly on other lessons and activities. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and with pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documents including those related to safeguarding (care and protection of pupils), the school improvement plan, pupils' work, and information about pupils' progress. They also took into account the views of pupils, staff and the responses of the six parents and carers who completed questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The impact of work being done to improve pupils' progress across subjects.
- The effectiveness of provision in meeting the wide range of individual needs.
- The effectiveness of leaders at all levels, and of the governing body, in helping to improve the school further during the period of change.

## Information about the school

Mabel Prichard caters for pupils with a range of severe learning difficulties and many have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Some pupils have additional complex needs such as autistic spectrum disorders. All pupils have a statement for their special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The majority of pupils are of White British heritage although a third are from other ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average.

The school is on two sites, a lower school and an upper school which are co-located with mainstream schools. The upper school site has recently been rebuilt and opened three weeks prior to the inspection. In September 2010, the school was re-designated to provide for young people aged 2 to 19. However, the youngest pupil currently on roll is aged three and the sixth form is not yet open. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught within the Mabel Prichard setting, or in mainstream Nursery and in a mixed-aged class of Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. The school has achieved National Healthy Schools Status and the Investor in People Award.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Mabel Prichard is a good school with a happy learning atmosphere. At the heart of the school's work are outstanding levels of care and support for every child. As a result, there is mutual respect between adults and pupils. Pupils say they feel extremely safe, as a result of the school's outstanding safeguarding procedures, and their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils' well-being is further enhanced by the outstanding effectiveness with which they are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles, recognised in a national award. The school is held in high regard by parents and carers. One commented, 'The headteacher and all the staff are wonderful. I never thought I would see the day my child is beginning to handle his disability.'

The school works outstandingly well in partnerships to promote the learning and well-being of pupils. The exceptional quality of its work is evident in the links with other agencies. As a result, therapists, medical staff and social services work very closely with school staff. This ensures that there is continuity in the application of individual support programmes for pupils. Links with the two co-located mainstream schools provide opportunities for some joint planning and delivery of provision, resulting in effective integration, in particular in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Pupils make good progress across subjects. This was evident in almost all lessons observed and confirmed by the data on pupils' achievements which the school collects through a rigorous process. Data show that progress is similar for different year groups and pupils with different special educational needs and/or disabilities. Appropriate interventions are put in place when, occasionally, a few pupils seem not to be making such good progress. Progress is also good in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Teaching and the curriculum are effective because of the clear focus on addressing pupils' individual needs and the efforts made to engage and motivate them to enjoy their learning. However, in a few lessons, time is not always used well. Consequently, the pace of learning slows and progress dips.

The headteacher, supported well by the governing body, has a clear view of where improvement is needed based on the school's accurate and thorough self-evaluation. This has resulted in improvements in many aspects of the school's work since its previous inspection, such as the tracking of pupil progress, the outstanding delivery of care, guidance and support and notably the new upper school building. These all indicate that the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

The school is experiencing a time of growth and change. The current senior leadership team is small. The headteacher, members of the governing body and staff are ambitious to make the school an outstanding one. Leaders acknowledge that this will be aided by the expansion of the current management structure as a key priority.

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

- Build on the current strengths of the school during this time of change by:
  - expanding the leadership team
  - sharing best practice to ensure all lessons maximise the use of time to promote learning.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy learning in a wide range of subject areas. For example, a secondary group with autistic spectrum disorders thoroughly enjoyed playing a variety of instruments to demonstrate their understanding of rhythm in a music lesson. They worked together well, waiting for their turn and accepting the contribution of others. In a primary design and technology lesson, another group with autistic spectrum disorders followed a recipe adapted to symbols. Their enjoyment of their learning was clearly evident as they waited sensibly for their turn, showing a sense of belonging and respect for each other.

Different groups of pupils achieve well in their lessons and make good progress from their starting points in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Older pupils' good progress is reflected in the achievement of external accreditation, and in their ability to undertake work-related placements.

The pupils' outstanding behaviour helps to create a positive learning atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils' smiling faces and readiness to follow staff directions clearly show that they feel very safe both in and out of school. Despite a number of unavoidable absences related to medical problems, their attendance is average. Pupils show respect for each other and enjoy working with each other in lessons. For example, in a lesson for older pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, the pupils clearly enjoyed responding to the different sounds they were asked to recognise. Pupils make a strong contribution to the life of the school and the wider community through raising funds for charities. The school council is prominent and makes decisions such as the development of a sensory garden. Money was raised and bulbs were planted by pupils and volunteers from the local business community.

Pupils' excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles is shown by their keen interest in sports and their knowledge of what constitutes healthy eating. For example, a group of pupils with severe learning difficulties noted that 'apples and bananas are good but that fizzy drinks are bad'. Through the focused development of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, as well as their personal skills, they are well prepared for the next stage of their lives. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is encouraged, for example through assemblies and visits out of school, as evidenced during the inspection by a trip for younger pupils to Blenheim Palace.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</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>

<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

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

## How effective is the provision?

The curriculum is personalised and meets the individual needs of pupils well and the school is working hard to further develop the sensory curriculum at Key Stage 2. Consequently, it is having a good impact on pupils' enjoyment and on their achievement. There is a strong focus on personal and social education activities leading to pupils' good social skills. Pupils' enjoyment is extended by opportunities to bring learning to life through visits, such as to Windsor Castle, and to local mosques, synagogues and churches. These opportunities provide pupils with memorable experiences. Cross-curricular themes are used well, for example a geography lesson

that combined cooking to enhance pupils' understanding of different foods in different countries. This enables pupils to see the relevance of their learning.

The quality of teaching is good. Strengths include a good range of resources, shared with the two co-located mainstream schools, exciting and motivating tasks, and the effective use of teaching assistants to facilitate learning. However, in a few lessons, pupils are not fully engaged and their progress slows because teachers do not maximise the use of learning time to best effect. There have been considerable improvements in assessment. Pupils' work is regularly monitored and the tracking of their progress is used effectively to inform appropriate interventions.

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Mabel Prichard staff give very careful attention to ensuring that the intimate care needs of pupils are met in a way that gives all pupils dignity and respect. Daily routines are secure and this ensures that pupils are relaxed in school, safe in the knowledge that support is close at hand and ready to learn. Individual education plans focus on the individual needs of each pupil, and targets are set based on these. These are challenging and are closely monitored by staff. Very thorough transition arrangements are in place to support pupils when they are joining or leaving the school, so that they settle quickly.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The successful leadership of the headteacher has resulted in a clear shared vision for the school, in particular during this time of significant change and expansion. This is based on high expectations and continuous improvement. Staff are valued, as reflected by the school's Investor in People status. Robust self-evaluation has ensured that the quality of teaching and its impact on learning are good. Leaders provide professional development opportunities to enhance staff's specialist teaching skills. The school's excellent communication with parents and carers includes booking interpreters for medicals and annual reviews.

The governing body is very effective in ensuring that the school meets its statutory obligations, for example with regard to the safeguarding of pupils. Arrangements in this respect are extremely robust. Procedures are constantly updated to reflect developing technologies and the school's collaborative working with other agencies is exemplary. The governing body challenges and holds the school to account. Members are clear that given the changing context of the school, the current small senior leadership team requires immediate review.

The school is very inclusive and promotes equalities of opportunities and tackles discrimination well. Consequently, it is a harmonious place for pupils to learn and play together. There is no evidence of discrimination and all pupils achieve well, irrespective of gender, ethnicity or special educational needs and/or disabilities. ♦

There are strengths in the effectiveness of the school's community cohesion, in particular its links with the two co-located mainstream schools, and with other schools in Oxford. The school is focused well on strengthening community links across the United Kingdom and beyond.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</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>2</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>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy a good start to their school lives. Children are happy being in school because of the welcoming learning environment, both inside and outside, and the warm relationships and good liaison with parents.

Consequently, their behaviour is exemplary and children feel very safe and secure. They quickly make friends through the importance placed on developing their skills at playing.

They make good progress as a result of well-planned provision, including for the more-able children who learn and play in the mainstream nursery. Children were observed confidently cleaning up and dancing to music with other mainstream children.

The curriculum and style of teaching are very appropriate in meeting the special educational needs and/or disabilities of all children. For example, children with profound and multiple learning difficulties were observed smiling in response to listening to music, and ambulant children delighted in exploring objects outside in the spring sunshine. A wide range of activities are carefully planned to allow children to learn through first-hand practical experiences. However, occasionally the pace of learning slows in some adult-directed learning sessions.

The care, guidance and support received by children are outstanding, and very effectively meet the individual needs of those with complex medical and physical requirements. Parents and carers receive high quality advice and support, and benefit further from several home visits each year. This enables them to be true partners in their children's learning.

The good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has established successful links with the mainstream setting to enhance the quality of provision. Staff work together well with real purpose to have a positive impact on the lives of children. In the mixed age



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class, the monitoring of the impact of planning for children in Reception is not as strong as the monitoring of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils; leaders are working hard to improve this.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

## Sixth form

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

There was a lower than average response from parents and carers in completing the Ofsted questionnaire for the inspection. However, they were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. They particularly appreciate how much their children enjoy school and how safe they are, with one parent commenting, 'Since my child has been at Mabel Prichard lower school, he has become more independent.' The inspection team found no evidence to support the few concerns raised.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mabel Prichard 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 6 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 67 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	5	83	1	17	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	5	83	1	17	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	3	50	3	50	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	3	50	2	33	1	17	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	4	67	1	17	1	17	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	50	2	33	1	17	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	3	50	3	50	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)	3	50	3	50	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	50	2	33	1	17	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	50	2	33	1	17	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	67	2	33	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	3	50	3	50	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	3	50	3	50	0	0	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 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and 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 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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 pupils' 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.**



25 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Mabel Prichard School, Oxford OX4 6SB**

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave to the inspectors when we recently visited your school, and special thanks to those of you who took the time to talk to us or tell us your views about the school through the questionnaire. We are pleased that almost all of you enjoy school and that those of you in the upper school are very impressed with your new building. I know some of you will not be able to read this letter but I hope your parents, carers or staff will help you.

We have judged your school to be good. Your headteacher and staff take excellent care of you which results in you feeling very safe at school. You behave extremely well. Consequently, you show respect towards each other and appreciate others' needs. The school works hard to contribute to your excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. The outstanding communication between the school and your parents and carers, and links with others, result in your good achievement and personal development outcomes.

To help the school improve further, we have asked teachers and leaders to do the following:

- Increase the size of the senior leadership team to reflect current changes, in order to allow the school to build on its many strengths.
- Ensure that best practice is shared to make all teachers maximise the use of learning times in lessons so that you are always interested in your activities. You can help by letting your teachers know if the pace of the lesson is too slow.

Yours sincerely

Anne Wright Lead inspector

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