



# Maplewood School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 108880  
**LEA** Sunderland  
**Inspection number** 278071  
**Inspection dates** 12 October 2005 to 13 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** David Smith

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Redcar Road
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Sunderland
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	6 to 13		Tyne and Wear, SR5 5PA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 5535587
<b>Number on roll</b>	70	<b>Fax number</b>	0191 5535585
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs June Fawkes
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 July 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jo Wilson

<b>Age group</b> 6 to 13	<b>Inspection dates</b> 12 October 2005 - 13 October 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 278071
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

## **Description of the school**

Maplewood is a day special school. Pupils are 6 to 13 years old and include five girls. Sixty eight pupils have statements of special educational need for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many have additional special educational needs and 70% have specialist support for their emotional difficulties. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds but no pupil speaks English as an additional language. Nearly half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and 17% are in public care. The school has received the Active Mark and Investors in People awards.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Maplewood gives its pupils a good education and this judgement matches the school's self evaluation in all respects. The pupils are very happy and, as a result, their attendance is very good. They have very good relationships with staff and behave well. Parents have every confidence in the school and recognise the difference it makes to their children's lives. Teaching is good and consequently pupils make good progress and achieve well. The effective contribution of the teaching assistants helps to ensure that the increasingly complex range of learners' needs is met. The curriculum is good and an exciting range of activities is organised during the school day. However, there is a lack of after-school activities, a factor which is highlighted in pupils' responses to their questionnaire. The headteacher leads well and develops very good teamwork in a happy, purposeful school. It provides good value for money.

Weaknesses identified in the last inspection have been dealt with fully. The school has an accurate view of its effectiveness and there is a clear commitment to continual improvement. There is, nonetheless, scope to improve the use of assessment, the accommodation and the opportunities provided for pupils to spend time in mainstream schools. Staff and governors are determined to provide even better opportunities for pupils and the school has the capacity to keep moving forward.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment more effectively in lesson planning to set more accurate targets for raising achievement.
- Adapt some of the accommodation to make it more suitable for the teaching of design and technology and art and design for older pupils.
- Enable pupils to join in lessons and other activities with children in mainstream schools.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

It is not appropriate to compare the standards of pupils' work with all schools nationally. However, pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science when compared to similar schools. Staff have high expectations of the pupils; they make good progress between years 2 and 6. The results of the 2005 tests for 11 year olds exceeded the school's targets which should have been set higher. Where underachievement is identified, for example in writing, the school provides an effective boost to pupils' learning. Achievement in French was an issue at the time of the last inspection; it is now good and pupils in years 7 and 8 follow a challenging examination course. Year 8 pupils place French high on their list of favourite subjects. Pupils apply their competent information and communication technology (ICT) skills effectively in other subjects. For example, their artwork on a computer is impressive. Pupils enjoy working towards a range of physical education awards and, for example, make very good

progress in swimming. Pupils with additional special educational needs and pupils in public care all achieve as well as their peers in the school.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils responded well in an assembly where they celebrated each other's achievement. They sang enthusiastically and were respectful during collective worship. Meal times and breaks provide a wealth of opportunities for pupils to talk and play together. The school has gained recognition for its drive to give a 'red card to racism'.

Attendance is very good; pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and thoroughly enjoy their time in the school. They look smart in their uniform and are respectful towards each other and their surroundings. The management of pupils' behaviour is consistent and the success of this approach is reflected in the limited use of exclusions. Pupils take increasing responsibility for their own actions and the older pupils are a credit to themselves and the school. Pupils enjoy each other's company, make good friends at the school, and work well in groups. A parent commented that her son's progress at the school had been "amazing" and that now he "wants to learn and enjoys school". The school encourages pupils to have a positive attitude to learning and to develop a strong work ethic and this helps prepare them well for the future. The school places a high priority on promoting healthy lifestyles and has gained an award. Pupils have responded to healthy eating initiatives and, despite initial reservations, they are adapting to new healthy menus. The school council makes a valuable contribution to school life and pupils particularly enjoy helping at charity events in the local community.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The inspection confirms the school's view that the quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In some lessons it is outstanding whilst occasionally in others it is satisfactory. Exceptional planning, enthusiastic teaching and very good subject expertise encourage Year 6 pupils to make outstanding progress in understanding the changing states of materials in science. The science room is used exceptionally well to develop pupils' attitudes as 'enquiring young scientists'. They use scientific terms with increasing accuracy and thoroughly enjoy their practical work. Year 8 pupils enjoy the opportunity to express their likes and dislikes in French and achieve well. Ambitious teaching challenged Year 5 pupils effectively and they buzzed with excitement as they worked together to construct containers in a design and technology topic. The contribution of teaching assistants is a consistent strength and helps to ensure that the full range of learners' needs are met. Relationships are very good and, as a result, pupils work very well together and learn from their mistakes. When teaching and learning are no

more than adequate there are weaknesses in the use of assessment to inform planning. Consequently, pupils' work is at the wrong level, they lose interest, become distracted and their progress is adversely affected. Also, when activities are too prolonged, particularly for younger pupils, the pupils become restless leading to progress in their learning which is no better than adequate.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

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The curriculum is good. The curriculum for pupils with additional special educational needs is a particularly good initiative and their learning needs are met well. The staff ensure that the small number of girls have equal access to an appropriate curriculum. Inadequacies in the accommodation limit pupils' access to the full range of activities in art and design and design and technology. There have been significant improvements in the provision for ICT which have helped to promote pupils' good achievement. The school is aware that the school day is too short for pupils in years 7 and 8. Some pupils successfully re-enter mainstream education but too few opportunities are provided for pupils to share their learning with their peers in mainstream schools.

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Pupils take part in a stimulating range of activities and visits. For example, during the inspection some pupils enjoyed a well planned geography field trip and returned with a good understanding of the features of a local river. Pupils also thoroughly enjoy outdoor and adventurous activities, such as rock climbing. Residential trips are a highlight of the year and pupils gain a great deal from this experience. However, there are no after-school activities and, consequently, a large percentage of pupils are not involved in teams or organised activities in the evening. The staff are determined to provide such activities with a particular emphasis on shared activities with mainstream pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

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Pupils are well cared for and the school is fully committed to pupils' welfare and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Their support and guidance are effective but there is a need to improve the use of data to establish more challenging targets. Pupils have trusting relationships and are happy to talk with staff if they have any worries. They feel safe and when asked about bullying expressed no concerns. The school effectively cares for pupils with an increasing range of special educational needs. There are good links that ease pupils' transition to the next stage of their education.

Child protection procedures are well-established and appropriate training is provided to keep staff up-to-date. Physical interventions are recorded but sending a confidential letter to parents rather than the diary entry they receive would improve procedures.

The school provides a generally safe environment with a very high regard for detailed risk assessments.

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## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

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The leadership and management of the school are good. The well-established headteacher is determined to drive forward continual improvement. The senior managers provide good support and have a combination of experience and energy. The senior staff work very well as a team and this is a major strength, which promotes a positive ethos. Governors know the school well, fulfill their statutory responsibilities, and have helped the school to make good progress since the last inspection. For example, they ensure that the performance management system identifies staff training needs. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is carried out effectively by subject coordinators as well as by senior managers. The school development plan has been improved. It is based on effective self-evaluation procedures and now provides a good focus for continual improvement. Parents value the regular and informative contact they have with the school. Taking all of this into account, the school is in a strong position to continue improving.

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The school has good partnerships with other agencies and this makes a good contribution to pupils' achievement. Staff work with a local primary school to check they have an accurate view of the standard of pupils' work. However, pupils do not take part in lessons with children from mainstream schools. This would be particularly useful in subjects such as design and technology where the school's facilities are limited.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE  
T 0207 421 6800  
F 0207 421 6707  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)  
Maplewood School  
Redcar Road  
Sunderland  
Tyne and Wear  
SR5 5PA  
14th October 2005

Dear Pupils,

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to your school. You looked very smart in your uniform and I understand why you are proud of your school. You made me feel very welcome and I enjoyed trying the food on your new healthy menu. Thank you for talking to me about your work and activities.

This is what I found out about your school:

I agree that you work hard and make good progress with your learning.

The staff work very well as a team and make sure you have good lessons and enjoy them.

Your attendance at school is very good.

Your behaviour is good and, in particular, the older pupils act very sensibly.

The staff encourage you to be healthy and you enjoy taking part in a good range of physical activities, although it would help if the school provided activities at the end of the day.

The headteacher, staff and governors manage the school well and provide you with a good education.

Even though I thought your school was good, I have asked Mrs Wilson, the teachers and the governors to make a few improvements by:

Providing special classrooms where the older pupils can have more opportunities to enjoy their practical work in art and design and design and technology.

Making sure that lessons are planned to help you to do your very best work.

Giving you the chance to spend some of your time in classes in other schools.

I hope that you will continue working hard, enjoy your learning and help the headteacher and staff make your school even better.

David Smith (Inspector)

Annex B