

# Maulden Lower School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109472
<b>Local Authority</b>	BEDFORDSHIRE
<b>Inspection number</b>	288389
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Susan Aldridge

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>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	175
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Caroline Gilby
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Veronica Gerig
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 November 2001
<b>School address</b>	Church Road Maulden Bedford MK45 2AU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01525 402286
<b>Fax number</b>	01525 402286

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school, catering mainly for pupils from the village. Although children's skill levels on entry vary, overall it is currently average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The socio-economic circumstances of most families are above average. There is a lower than average proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities and three with statements of special educational need. A very small number are in public care.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. Effective self-evaluation enables staff and governors accurately to identify the school's strengths and areas that need further development. It provides a good standard of education and care for its pupils and gives good value for money.

When children enter the Reception year their knowledge and skills are typical of children of their age. The good provision in this class ensures that they make good progress and achieve well. They are well prepared for more formal approaches in Year 1. Good teaching, an effective range of learning experiences and good care, guidance and support all contribute to the effective progress that pupils make. By Year 4 they reach standards that are above those expected by this stage. Standards in reading are particularly high. Standards have risen steadily in the last five years because the school has developed a robust system of assessment and analysis of data in Years 1 to 4. This system has enabled staff to see that pupils between Year 2 and Year 4 do not make quite as much progress in mathematics as they do in English, so this has become a focus for development.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their enjoyment is very evident and contributes to the happy atmosphere in the school. Participation in sporting activities is good and teams are successful in competitions. Pupils are also taught well how to eat healthily and keep safe. There are lots of opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school, to village life and the wider community. They also learn well how to work in groups and teams. High standards in basic skills mean that they are well prepared for middle school and adult responsibilities in the future.

For some time, staff have involved all pupils in their learning by discussing areas of improvement with them and agreeing targets for them to work towards. This practice is not yet equally well established across the school. It is working best where targets are known and understood by pupils and are taken into account when teachers plan and teach their lessons. Occasionally, targets are too broad, which makes it difficult to say whether or not they are met.

The school owes much of its success to good leadership and management. The headteacher leads with great commitment, energy and enthusiasm and has quickly established a new management structure that ensures that responsibilities are shared well. Teamwork is good and staff support one another well. Governance is effective. Governors are supportive, involved and well informed. Parental satisfaction is very high. One wrote to say that the school 'is very much the centre of our community and we value it greatly'. The school responds to rare parental concerns in a positive way. The parents' association raises considerable funds which bring in additional resources and the activities that they organise enrich the life of the school. Productive links with the village and wider communities have the same positive impact. The school provides a venue for several village events. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The school's strengths have been maintained and weaknesses have been dealt with effectively. The capacity for further improvement is good.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the progress made in mathematics from Year 2 to Year 4 so that it is as good as that made in English.
- Ensure that there are precise targets set for pupils, that they know and understand these and that teachers take the targets into account when planning lessons.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement and standards are good. Almost all parents agree that pupils make good progress at the school. Children enter Reception with knowledge and skills expected at that age. By Years 2 and 4, standards are above average, showing that pupils achieve well in their time at the school. Pupils make the best progress in reading to reach well above average standards by Year 4. This year, many Year 4 pupils are reading at the level expected of Year 6 pupils and a few are at the higher level, Level 5. Over the last five years, standards in Year 4 have steadily risen because of the careful monitoring of assessment information and good intervention to support pupils who are not making expected progress. The school recognises that progress in mathematics from Year 2 to Year 4 is not as good as that in English, and is working hard to implement suitable procedures to boost this. Although boys consistently outperform girls by Year 2, differences by Year 4 have evened out, and all groups of pupils make equally good progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school very much so it is not surprising that attendance is above the national figure. Incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with effectively. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour in class, and around the school, is most often good and occasionally exemplary. Relationships are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good, and is helped by things like visiting a local mosque and supporting a school in Malawi. Pupils of all ages have good opportunities to voice their opinions through the very effective school council. They contribute well to the community through supporting local and national charities. Pupils can talk knowledgeably about healthy lifestyles, although sometimes their lunch boxes do not reflect this understanding. Their good basic skills and opportunities to work in pairs and groups equip them well for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Careful monitoring and support for teachers ensure that the school's teaching and learning policy is implemented well. Teachers know their pupils well and use their accurate assessment information to plan effectively for pupils' needs. The setting of different tasks for ability groups in lessons helps to ensure that work is pitched at the right level for all. The three-part lesson is well established and teachers ensure that pupils know what they are learning about. In the best practice pupils also understand clearly what they need to do to show that they have met objectives successfully. Teachers use a good range of strategies and resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), to make learning enjoyable. Pupils' good attitudes to learning help them to make good progress in lessons. When tasks are timed, pupils rise well to the challenge of completing tasks. They also learn from one another, when talking with partners or reviewing work at the end of each lesson. A good start has been made in involving pupils in assessing their work and that of others. The school

acknowledges that this is an area for further development as it is not well established in all classes.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It meets requirements and includes a broad range of interesting and enjoyable experiences. Staff plan the curriculum well to ensure that mixed age classes do not repeat or miss out work. The personal, social and health education programme provides good opportunities to encourage pupils to live healthily and keep safe. ICT is well developed in the school, with many opportunities for pupils to use computers and other technology to support their learning well. The school has begun to link subjects together to make learning more enjoyable and meaningful for pupils. Booster classes and literacy programmes provide effective help for those who need it. The school organises a good range of mainly sporting after-school activities which are well attended. There are plans to extend these to include more arts-based opportunities. Pupils enjoy enrichment opportunities such as arts week and educational visits, especially the residential visit to France for older pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The attention given to pupils' welfare is particularly strong. Pupils are confident that there is always someone to whom they can turn for advice or support. Arrangements for child protection are secure and the safety of pupils has a high priority. Staff are particularly alert to any pupil who may be upset or in need of adult help. Trained learning support assistants are well deployed to help the pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Good links with outside agencies ensure that pupils have access to professional help, from therapists for instance. Pupils' work is assessed and marked thoroughly, and individual targets are set in numeracy and literacy, although this is better established and more effective in some classes than others. Pupils are well supported for the transition to, through and from the school and older pupils approach the move to middle school with confidence.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has made a considerable impact on the school both as a deputy headteacher and more recently as the headteacher. She has led successfully the use of assessment data to raise standards, for example. The relatively new management structure is working well. Teachers with teaching and learning responsibilities lead well on whole-school matters, such as literacy, numeracy and the coordination of special educational needs. They play a full part in monitoring and evaluating provision and standards. They work well together as a team and all staff are supported effectively in developing their skills.

Governors are well informed by the visits they make to the school and the full reports they receive from the headteacher. They are also involved fully in the processes of self-evaluation and school development planning.

School self-evaluation is good. The process involves all stakeholders and the school is responsive to constructive criticism. Although good use is made of data to raise achievement in Years 1

to 4, more effective use could be made of the data available in Reception to evaluate the impact of developments such as the outdoor play facilities.

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## Annex A

## 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>
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

14 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Maulden Lower School, Bedford, MK45 2AU

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school, especially to those of you who talked to us about school life and your work in lessons. We enjoyed our visit. We came to see how well you are all getting on and whether there are any things that could be done to make your school even better.

We agree with the staff that yours is a good school. It is good because Mrs Gerig, the staff and governors are all doing such a good job. You are all making good progress with your work, especially in reading. You are also developing well as young citizens, which is important. We were pleased to see how much you all enjoy coming to school. Your attendance is good and so is your behaviour. At times we also saw excellent behaviour. When we came into lessons we saw how hard you were working. The teaching is good and you have lots of interesting and enjoyable activities in lessons and during visits. Your sports teams certainly do well. The staff look after you very well. We were pleased to hear that you feel safe in school and feel able to go to an adult if you need someone to talk to. We were impressed with the school council and the way you all take part in school and village activities as well as raising funds for charities. It was good to see how well you all get on together too. The 'buddy bench' is a good idea too. You work well together in groups in class, when you raise money or run stalls at the summer fair.

There are two main things that the staff are going to be working on. At the moment, you are not making quite as much progress in mathematics between Year 2 and Year 4 as you do in English. The staff know this and are working hard to help you make better progress in mathematics. We were pleased to see that you and your teachers agree targets for improving your literacy and numeracy. The staff are going to make sure that these are quite clear and that you know and understand what your targets are. Teachers are going to keep these in mind when planning and teaching your lessons. You can help by making sure you keep up the good work and reach your targets as quickly as you can. We wish you all the best for the future.

Mrs S Aldridge

Lead Inspector