



Maldon Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114806
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 290038
Inspection date 11 October 2006
Reporting inspector Keith Sadler

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wantz Chase
School category	Community		Maldon
Age range of pupils	4-11		Essex CM9 3DQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01621853409
Number on roll (school)	376	Fax number	01621842779
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Andrew Mugford
		Headteacher	Mr R Taverner
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2003		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector over one day.

Description of the school

This is a very large primary school. Pupils come from a socially mixed urban community. More than three quarters of the pupils are from white British backgrounds. The next largest ethnic background is Asian or Asian British, Bangladeshi. The rest come from seven other ethnic groups and there are a few pupils at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is significantly above the national average. The number with learning difficulties and disabilities is about average. Although the full range of ability is represented in the intake overall, attainment on entry is below levels expected, with communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional skills being weaker than other areas of learning. The school provides a breakfast club and after school care on a daily basis.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Maldon is an effective and improving school that has a number of outstanding features. It is not surprising that parents are almost unanimously supportive of the school because it provides a good quality education. One parent said, 'I believe that they do a stellar job of meeting the needs of a diverse group of children who come from a wide range of backgrounds.' This is one of the key strengths of the school. The care, guidance and support offered are excellent. Although many children enter the reception classes with weak skills, and lack confidence, because of the rich provision they settle quickly and soon become secure with positive attitudes, for example, when singing in front of their parents in their own harvest festival celebration. Another parent said, 'the school provides an excellent environment for learning and teachers maintain a positive, enthusiastic 'can do' attitude.' This is true. There is a very positive atmosphere and ethos of support, trust and excellent relationships in which pupils thrive in their learning. Pupils' enjoyment of school is outstanding. In addition, their views are carefully listened to and accommodated by the school and, as a result, pupils make an outstanding contribution to the life of the school community. One pupil said, 'we all help each other because we want everyone to be happy.' Pupils' personal development is consistently good. However, attendance levels have dipped to slightly below average in the last two years after being at the national average until that time. This is despite the very positive encouragement given to parents to ensure that their children attend regularly. When the good quality of teaching and learning and the excellent curriculum is added to the mix, it is not surprising that pupils develop a love of learning. When one younger pupil complained that she had to do too much writing, a Year 6 boy responded to her saying 'you get used to writing and by Year 6 you just don't want to stop doing it.' These positive attitudes contribute well to the good achievement that is secured for all groups of pupils. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. This enables pupils to achieve well in the Foundation Stage and the infant classes. By the time they reach the end of Year 2 their progress is such that standards have caught up with the national average, although too few pupils gain the higher levels. This is because in a few lessons, teachers do not provide activities to extend the most able. Pupils continue to progress well in the junior years. In the national tests for Year 6 pupils, standards are significantly above average and their achievement is good. Even though leadership and management were found to be of good quality in the inspection in 2003, the school has not stood still and there have been radical changes made in its leadership organisation. The school has built on its previous successes and has reinvigorated its leadership. This is reflected in the enthusiasm of staff and pupils for all that takes place. The new leadership team has put in place some innovative and creative aspects of learning which have set the pupils' imagination alight. The way that the school has been steered in the past three years has been outstanding and is a credit to the headteacher, assistant headteachers, staff and governors all of whom provide excellent leadership and management. The re-modelled curriculum and new initiatives to support the pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent, very well founded and already having a positive impact

on pupils' achievement as shown through the improving standards in both 2005 and 2006 tests. The school is set fair for further improvements in attainment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels of attainment at the end of Year 2. - Work closely with parents to improve levels of attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The attainment on entry to Reception, which is below that expected nationally, is typified by some boys who find socialising hard and who struggle with writing and mathematics. Nevertheless, progress is good in Reception though only a few children reach the nationally expected levels by the end of the year. Thereafter, progress remains good in each year group and for all groups of pupils except for those who find learning easy at the end of Year 2. Although standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the tests for seven-year-olds are average, few pupils attain higher levels particularly in reading and writing. By the end of Year 6, achievement is good for all groups of pupils in the junior years. As one parent of a pupil with a statement of educational needs said, 'my daughter's progress is such that it justifies our sending her to a mainstream school.'

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils like their teachers and enjoy their lessons enormously. One of the reasons for this is because, since the last inspection, the staff have reviewed their lessons to make sure that all learning styles and needs are catered for by teachers. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. At each stage, they are well prepared for their next steps in life and learning. They relish contributing to school life through running the fruit sales, being playground buddies and raising money for charities. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe and are conscious of healthy lifestyles and taking regular exercise. However, this is not always represented in their snacks and lunchboxes. Attendance levels are affected because a few parents do not heed the persistent reminders from school and ensure their children attend regularly. Behaviour is good and pupils are tolerant of other children who have behavioural support needs.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good with some excellent features. Staff manage pupils well, have positive relationships and take great care in ensuring that their plans cover the diverse needs of the pupils. Assessment influences strongly what is taught and how pupils are grouped for learning on most occasions. However, teachers sometimes do not provide enough challenge for the more able pupils in the infant classes, particularly in their reading and as a result they do not make as much progress as their classmates. Teachers and their assistants work closely to present learning in a lively fashion and they make a good contribution to learning. Pupils are clear about their goals, and activities bounce along briskly presenting them with challenges to stretch the intellect and imagination. As a result pupils are highly motivated and work hard. Learning is enhanced by the effective use of interactive whiteboards by both staff and pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The excellent curriculum enables pupils to flourish. It is highly enriched by a very good programme of additional activities through the year which adds greatly to pupils' learning and enjoyment. In addition, there are frequent weeks set aside for special focused learning, for example, when a Nigerian artist in residence effectively taught pupils, staff, governors and parents. The youngest children benefit from a stimulating, well resourced and highly effective Foundation Stage curriculum. One of the new innovations is for links between subjects to be planned wherever possible, such as in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were planning a newsletter regarding Hercules. Here the curriculum was very effectively linked to combine aspects of learning in history, English and information and communication technology (ICT). The curriculum is further enhanced by provision of French and residential study visits. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the good range of clubs. Curricular arrangements are good for supporting pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for. Arrangements for safeguarding them are excellent. The support given to children and parents when they start school is very helpful. Very positive relationships ensure that pupils feel confident to seek help when they need it. In addition, innovations such as the learning mentor for Year 6 boys, having two trained councillors to support unhappy pupils and projects with agencies such as Barnardos to support pupils with difficulties, make a particularly contribution to the provision. These initiatives also support the inclusion of vulnerable pupils in

school. Systems to assess pupils' progress are excellent and enable teachers to plan which meets the needs of all pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Improvements in leadership and management have been pivotal to the school's improving effectiveness. The headteacher and two assistant heads provide excellent leadership and steer the school well towards meeting the clear vision that they have for the school. Governors play a particularly important role in making sure that the school fully meets requirements and by supporting and questioning well. The school knows itself very well and this is reflected in the high quality self-evaluation and planning for improvement. There is excellent examination of test results and other data about learning to make sure that pupils receive the teaching and curriculum they need. The school has a wide range of strong and purposeful partnerships that contribute exceptionally well to its provision. Examples include transition links with the nearby secondary school, networks for mathematics, and sports partnerships. Leadership and management is effective and value for money is good. The accommodation is of good quality and well maintained though the space for outdoor play is limited. The school's track record of improvement shows that it has excellent capacity to improve teaching and to raise standards further.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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	1
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

12 October 2006 Dear Pupils Maldon Primary School, Wantz Close, Maldon, Essex, CM9 5DQ
Thank you for your help when I inspected your school. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit because everyone was so welcoming and friendly. I would like to share with you what I thought. These are the things that I think are best about your school - The staff help you to love school, enjoy being with your friends and being very keen to learn. - You are provided with an excellent range of interesting activities in lessons and also in clubs and visits. - Teaching is good and all the adults take extremely good care of you so that you make good progress and stay safe. - The way the school is led is outstanding with staff and governors working hard to find ways to make the school even better. - You all make good progress in your learning. I know that everyone wants to do even better and I have suggested two things that I think will help. - Your teachers need to make sure that those of you that find learning easy do even better in the Year 2 tests. - The school needs to work more closely with your families to improve the rate of attendance. I am confident that you will continue to enjoy your school and I wish you well in the future.
With best wishes Keith Sadler Lead Inspector