

Mayplace Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101417
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	307677
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	423
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	68
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs P Riddle
Headteacher	Mrs J Pemberton
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Woodside Road Bexleyheath DA7 6EQ
Telephone number	01322 523 256
Fax number	01322 551 924

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2008
Inspection number	307677

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Mayplace is a large school set in extensive grounds. The school has a Nursery class, which, with its Reception class, forms the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The school has an on-site breakfast club and a privately run after school club.

Over three quarters of all pupils come from White British families. A few pupils come from Black African and Asian Indian backgrounds. Only a very few pupils speak English as an additional language. In the last two years, the number of pupils who join and leave the school during the course of the school year has increased and the school has an increasing number of pupils with learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special education need is higher than average. Pupils' particular difficulties relate mostly to speech and language, behaviour and autistic spectrum disorders. The school has gained awards including Healthy Schools, Eco Schools and a Leading Aspects award for a creative curriculum. The EYFS has received a special accreditation. In the last two years, there have been a significant number of changes in staffing due to illness and promotion.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Mayplace Primary is a happy, caring and successful school, which provides a good and improving education for its pupils. The headteacher leads the school well with her recently appointed senior management team and strong support from governors. The school has recovered well from high staff turnover in the last two years and the difficulties faced through staff illness and the death of two members of staff.

The strong team ethos, clear leadership and, effective teaching and learning enable pupils to make good overall progress as they move through the school. Pupils' achievement is good allowing pupils to emerge from Year 6 well prepared for their future lives. Pupils who continue their education all through the school do particularly well and this is most evident in their progress and attainment in English. Standards, by the end of Year 6, have improved since the last inspection, especially in this subject. Overall, standards are above average. The way in which leaders have developed assessment systems is an important factor in pupils' good achievement. For example, leaders rigorously check that pupils are making the expected progress and if pupils make slower progress they are quickly identified and given specific help. The good support for pupils with learning difficulties and the introduction of further support groups is helping all groups of learners to make good progress.

Leaders' main priority had been English and mathematics. Achievement is improving well and is now good overall, especially in English. They are now rightly focused on lifting standards in science. This is the correct area to be working on, so that the most able pupils can do better and reach the higher level (Level 5) in their work. The school has a good capacity to improve, especially having recently strengthened the leadership of science. A science specialist is working closely with other leaders to develop learning opportunities.

Pupils behave well, are polite and show positive attitudes to learning and each other. Pupils told inspectors that, 'This is a very happy school'. Almost all pupils really enjoy coming to school because they get to do many different things, and relationships are very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong, which helps them to develop respect for others.

The curriculum is good and supported by a wide range of extra activities. The very attractive displays around school demonstrate high expectations and the interesting links made between subjects. The superb grounds are used well to enliven pupils' enthusiasm for learning and ensure that pupils get plenty of fresh air! Pupils know much about how to be healthy and they make an important contribution to the wider community. They generally understand how to be safe.

Leaders and staff have developed strong relationships and partnership with pupils, parents and the community. The partnership with parents is especially strong, with over 50 parents helping in school on a weekly basis. This enhances pupils' enthusiasm and success in learning and helps promote good community cohesion. As one parent put it, 'The school has a real community feel about it and the atmosphere is caring and fun'. Most parents have confidence in the work of the school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good developments are taking place to implement the most recent guidance for the EYFS curriculum because leadership and management are effective. Children's health and well-being are well promoted. Adults are very caring and there is a lovely sense of children being able to

be independent whilst understanding the rules, boundaries and expectations of school life. The very strong partnership with parents contributes much to the very good relationships and children's enjoyment of school.

Teaching and learning are good and enhanced by an extensive and interesting outside learning environment. The outside area helps children to have fun, develop good physical skills and gain a wide knowledge of the world around them. Children quickly grow in confidence and learn how to socialise, cooperate and concentrate well. They keenly explore things for themselves, develop their imaginations and delight in the activities provided. Staff effectively help children to speak with greater clarity and accuracy and they make especially good progress in this area of learning. The emphasis on number and problem-solving activities is also especially good.

Children achieve well. Until 2007, standards by the end of the EYFS had been average. In 2008, standards improved rapidly in all areas of learning except reading and writing, where standards were broadly average. Leaders' higher expectations and an improved curriculum have led to recent improvements. Leaders are now ambitious to increase children's reading and writing skills. As a result, there is now a more rigorous emphasis on helping children to learn their letters and sounds and work has begun on this well. However, opportunities are missed for children to write and read especially whilst playing. There are not enough exciting writing resources available to promote spontaneous writing or to develop writing in different ways.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more challenging work in science, so that the most able pupils reach higher standards.
- Widen and increase opportunities for the youngest children in the EYFS to do more reading and writing activities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. From children's often average starting points, they make good progress as they move through the school. This leads to standards that are, overall, higher than average by the end of Year 6. Sometimes, standards fluctuate in some years due to high numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and the late entry of pupils into Years 4, 5 and 6, which also lowers the overall ability profile of pupils. Standards are on track to return to the higher level in 2009. Of note is the increasing proportion of pupils on track to gain the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics, with some working towards even higher levels, more commonly found in secondary schools. In science, pupils often get to the expected level 4 but too few get to level 5. Leaders are now setting challenging targets to improve science.

Leaders have been working to improve standards by the end of Year 2 in writing, as they were too low. This was due to a lack of rigour in the teaching of early writing skills in the past. From the lessons seen and assessment information, this is developing well in Years 1 and 2. The recent foci on boys' achievement and the curriculum and teaching are helping standards to rise.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school, as evident in their greatly improved attendance. Pupils behave well and are mostly very kind. One boy said, 'Other people hold the door for you, and I do the same'. When acting as 'Peer Mentors' they help children to be happy at playtimes. Pupils enjoy

fundraising, and their support for a school in Africa is impressive. Pupils build up a good awareness of global issues and an understanding and involvement in fair trade. Pupils' spirituality develops well, not just in terms of religion but also by experiencing the wonder of art, nature and music. Pupils were thrilled when breeding butterflies from caterpillars. The lovely school environment encourages pupils to enjoy being outside. They are actively involved in recycling as 'Eco Warriors' and pupils greatly enjoy their cookery lessons with a professional chef, gardening and sports. These activities help them to be fit and healthy. Pupils learn how to manage money by shopping to a budget, managing spreadsheets and by comparing prices. Pupils are generally clear about how to be safe in the world around them but their understanding is not always secure. For example, pupils could not explain how to be safe when using information and communication technology (ICT).

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Work is well organised and thoroughly planned to make learning exciting. Teaching in mathematics and English is challenging. Teachers provide plenty of time for pupils to talk about ideas; they are knowledgeable and motivate pupils to become independent thinkers. However, in a few lessons pupils sit for too long whilst teachers talk and this limits independent work. Pupils' positive attitudes, good behaviour and relationships with staff help them to work hard. Teachers help pupils to learn in different ways. For example, when looking at the painting 'The Fighting Temeraire' pupils explored their emotions and used their imaginations. As a result, they produced high quality art and written work. Teachers use assessment information well to plan the next steps of pupils' learning in English and mathematics. However, a lack of challenge in science hampers pupils from doing better. Parents give very good support in lessons, and assistants often contribute much to pupils' good progress although their understanding of how to develop phonics is inconsistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The wide range of class activities, visits and clubs help pupils to achieve well and become rounded individuals. Links between different subjects are good. Leaders have introduced a new writing project to inspire all pupils to write at length and for exciting purposes. In particular, this is helping boys' writing to improve well. The introduction of joined handwriting, early in Key Stage 1, is also aiding improving standards. Increased investigation and problem-solving activities in mathematics are helping pupils to understand mathematics well. The extension of the good EYFS curriculum into Year 1 is especially pleasing to see and is successful as pupils enjoy a good range of activities that allow them to learn through play as well as through more formal teacher-led activities. Pupils especially enjoy drama or role-play. The curriculum strongly supports pupils' personal development and is enhanced by specialist teaching of music and sport. Leaders are working to widen early writing activities in the EYFS, but there is still more to do. Challenging, practical investigations are correctly a focus for improvement in science.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school makes care, guidance and support a top priority. Pastoral care is very good and consequently most pupils say they feel safe, secure, and eager to attend school. Most parents have confidence in the care and support given. A few, who responded to the questionnaire, noted some concern about bullying. Inspectors can assure parents that if bullying occurs this is taken seriously. However, the headteacher recognises that there is room for improvement through more frequent review meetings to check that pupils and parents feel as well supported as possible. Incidences of bullying are rare. The strong focus on promoting healthy lifestyles and emotional well-being are real strengths of the care given to pupils. The school actively encourages pupils to contribute their views, so that they can support them well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and achieve well. Pupils' work is often marked effectively, but this does vary from subject to subject and does not always tell pupils how to improve and reach their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides clear vision and has high expectations. Members of the new leadership team are thoroughly committed and are introducing new ideas well. For example, the deputy headteacher has worked with the headteacher to introduce an innovative and successful way of tracking pupils' progress. As a result, all teachers are fully involved and accountable for the progress of their pupils. Teamwork is strong and staff quickly develop new skills by sharing ideas. Leaders and staff, at all levels, are fully involved in evaluating the work of the school. Governors call the school to account well and have a good idea about the school's strengths and areas for development. They are however, clearer about the progress of older pupils than the younger ones. Target setting is now good because the tracking of pupils' progress is much improved. There is a clear emphasis on improving science. The headteacher supports professional development well and this often results in the promotion of skilled staff to other schools. The very strong links with parents and the community help to promote good community cohesion.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

21 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mayplace Primary School, Bexleyheath, DA7 6EQ

You may remember that three inspectors came to your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly and telling us about your school.

You go to a happy and good school where you are helped to learn the important things that will help you to do well in the future. This means that many of you get to the level in your work that we expect in English and mathematics and a good number of you get to the higher level. In particular, you are doing better in English because the school has improved writing activities, and you enjoy these. The teachers help you to learn new things well.

We were impressed by your behaviour and very pleased to hear that you enjoy coming to school. Well done for improving your attendance, please keep this up! We were very impressed by how you are trying to become fit and healthy and were delighted to hear about your special cookery classes. Well done for doing such good art and English work about 'The Fighting Temeraire'; this is very impressive.

Your headteacher and all of the other adults do a good job in looking after you. We especially like the activities they give you to do. We were delighted to find out that you do plenty of music and sports and are pleased that you do so many things for the community. Keep up the good fund-raising for the school in Africa!

Your headteacher, other adults and governors are keen to try to do the best they can for you. We want to help them. We have asked them to do the following things.

- Help the youngest children in the Nursery and Reception classes to do more reading and writing activities.
- Help those of you who find learning easy to do more challenging activities in science.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons

Lead Inspector