

Maundene School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118525
Local Authority	Medway
Inspection number	312975
Inspection date	10 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	427
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Wadey
Headteacher	Norman Cutting
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2004
School address	Swallow Rise Walderslade Chatham ME5 7QB
Telephone number	01634 864721
Fax number	01634 867166

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and particularly investigated girls' achievement in mathematics, the progress of more able pupils, and arrangements for sharing and ensuring continuity of leadership. Parts of some lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including self-evaluation, was scrutinised. The inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Pupils start at this large school with a broad range of capabilities, but overall their skills are below those expected for their ages. An average proportion of pupils have, mostly moderate, learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The headteacher is due to retire at the end of this year after many years at the helm. At the time of the inspection, the school was in the process of recruiting his successor.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Maundene is a good school. The headteacher, staff and governors have set and largely met the school's ambitious aims to:

provide a safe, caring and happy environment, which gives children the security and confidence to learn effectively

offer a good all round education which meets the needs of each individual child and motivates all children to learn

set high expectations for work and behaviour, so that all children are encouraged to realise their full potential

meet the spiritual, moral and social needs of all children, so that they develop and mature to become caring, responsible young people.

Parents voice particular praise for the school's good care and welfare arrangements, which contribute to pupils' strong feeling of well-being and their enjoyment of school. As one parent commented, 'Dedicated staff have provided a happy, safe and supportive learning environment for my children to thrive in.' Another pointed out that, from the start of the Reception Year through to Year 6, children become 'eager learners due to the teaching they receive at Maundene'. Pupils say that they feel really safe at school and they learn to be safe, with, for example, all learning to swim by the time they leave. Pupils' good enjoyment of school shows through in their above average attendance rates.

Pupils themselves describe how 'teachers encourage us'. The good relationships throughout the school help motivate pupils to try hard and do their best. As a result, they get through a lot of work in their well paced lessons. Pupils benefit not only from good teaching but also from an imaginative curriculum which includes French and Tai Chi and which links different subjects so that, as pupils explain, 'We get to do fun activities in lessons.' Pupils in Year 5, for example, made good progress in both their history and literacy work as they used role play and descriptive language to explore the emotions of sailors in the Spanish Armada. Pupils all have targets for literacy and numeracy and these, together with teachers' helpful marking of their work, give pupils good guidance on how to do better.

Teachers' expectations are high, both in terms of pupils' behaviour and the standard of their work. Behaviour throughout the school is good, and pupils respond with enthusiasm to the school's systems of rewards and penalties. Older pupils look forward eagerly to their end-of-year reward trip to Chessington and are anxious to avoid the 'three strikes and you're out' that would mean they would have to stay behind. Standards in the Year 2 and Year 6 national tests have been consistently above average, preparing pupils well for the next stage of their education. In the past, more able pupils have not always done as well as they could. School leaders have identified this and have been successful in encouraging teachers to set all pupils challenging work that is well matched to their needs. As a result, pupils of all abilities, including the most able and those with moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well. Although pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science, standards in mathematics have traditionally lagged a little behind those in the other subjects. This is because some girls, in particular, have not done as well as they should in this subject. Again, the picture is an improving one, with measures taken this year to further boost pupils' performance in mathematics already yielding evidence of faster progress. Nevertheless, some girls still lack

confidence in volunteering answers and in applying their calculation skills to problem solving in mathematics.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils get on very well with each other and treat others with politeness and respect. They take a pride in the school, in their work and in the many responsibilities they take on within the school community. These include their roles as school councillors, peer mediators and 'Walk on Wednesday' monitors – encouraging others to walk to school at least once a week. Most take part in the impressive range of clubs on offer, covering sports, crafts and even podcasting. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to take exercise and eat a healthy diet, even though many confess to preferring the 'chips on Friday' school meals.

The school's success in achieving its aims stems from its good leadership and management. The headteacher and the staff who form the 'basic skills team' have an accurate picture of how well the school is doing and their rigorous monitoring of standards, pupils' progress and the quality of provision have enabled them to put in place improvements to tackle areas identified for development. A number of parents are apprehensive about the headteacher's impending retirement, but senior leaders and governors have established robust systems to help maintain continuity. These show the school's good capacity for further improvement. Staff with subject leadership responsibilities, for example, have a very clear understanding of the performance data for their subjects and of measures needed to maintain good and further improved rates of progress.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Parents are pleased at the way their children are helped to quickly settle into school. As one wrote, 'The teaching staff have made my son comfortable in his new surroundings.' Parents also commend the good links between Reception staff and home. One explained that if her son falls behind in anything, 'His teacher is quick to report it to me so that she can work on it with him and I can at home.' Parents point to improvements this year in the Foundation Stage, as teaching has become more focused on children's progress. Children make good progress. They are on track to reach above average standards, especially in their social development, and they show good concentration and growing independence.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils, and particularly girls, to develop more confidence in answering questions in mathematics and in applying their calculation skills to mathematical problem solving.

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Annex A

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
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well 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 the 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

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.

Annex A

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 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

10 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Maundene School, Chatham ME5 7QB

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school today. I am writing to tell you what I found.

You are obviously very proud of your school, and you are right to be. It is a good, well run school where, from the Reception Year through to Year 6, you are looked after well and make good progress. Children leave the school at the end of Year 6 with consistently above average standards. This is because the teaching is good and the school has been successful in making learning interesting and fun, particularly in the way it links subjects together. Even though you do well, you do not all do quite so well in maths as you do in English and science. This is because some of you, especially some of the girls, are not as confident at answering teachers' questions in maths or at applying your good calculation skills at maths problem-solving. I know that your headteacher and basic skills team are aware of this and have already begun to address it, but I have asked them to do more to help build your confidence in this subject.

I was impressed with how well behaved you are and how well you get on with and are keen to help each other. There is a real sense of community at Maundene. You enjoy school, and I was pleased to see that so many of you take part so enthusiastically in the many clubs and other activities arranged for you in and after school. I was sorry that I didn't get a chance to see the Tai Chi, but I am looking forward to downloading your podcast. Some of you told me how much you know about the importance of exercise and of eating healthily. I like chips, too, and there's no need to feel guilty about liking them served up on Fridays provided you don't have them every other day of the week.

I am sure that if you continue to work hard and do your best, you will continue to do well at Maundene.

Best wishes
Yours sincerely
Selwyn Ward
Lead Inspector

10 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Maundene School, Chatham ME5 7QB

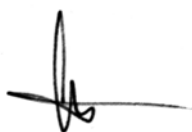
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Best wishes
Yours sincerely



Selwyn Ward
Lead Inspector