

Manor Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	135178
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	381826
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2012
Lead inspector	Sheena MacDonald HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	523
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Trixie Ball
Headteacher	David Lloyd
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 June 2009
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	12–13 January 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Sheena MacDonald

Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter Dacombe

Additional inspector

Carol Vant

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 27 lessons and two assemblies, involving 20 teachers. They held discussions with the headteacher, the senior leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the school improvement plan, monitoring and assessment information, the minutes of the governing body's meetings, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, case studies relating to a sample of pupils and pupils' books. Inspectors also heard pupils read and discussed reading and writing with them. In addition, inspectors considered the responses to questionnaires from staff, pupils and 197 parents and carers.

Information about the school

Manor Community Primary is much larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also higher than average and most of these pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than normal times is increasing and is now higher than average. Since the last inspection the school has moved into a new building and grown in size so that there are currently three classes in each of the year groups from Reception to Year 3. Several classes are accommodated in a building a few minutes walk from the main building. The school met the government's floor targets in 2011.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Pupils' achievement slipped slightly during the period of transfer into the new building and the rapid expansion of pupil numbers. There is now a very strong, and increasingly effective, whole-school focus on raising attainment, as a result of which pupils are now making better progress.
- By the time pupils leave the school their attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics with most achieving the expected Level 4 in both subjects. When pupils arrive they often have lower-than-expected language skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world is limited. These aspects are not tackled sufficiently rigorously in the younger age groups and this continues to impede achievement throughout the school. As a result, attainment at the higher levels is lower than average, especially in writing.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers make increasingly good use of individual targets, particularly in writing, to inform lesson planning and involve the pupils in their learning, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop problem-solving and independent-learning skills.
- The quality of care for all pupils is good. This is particularly true for vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, pupils behave well, feel very safe and have good attitudes towards their learning. Attendance, however, is very low, with too many pupils, particularly in the early years of school, having too much time off.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Despite the difficulties and disruption of the last two years, the headteacher, governors and senior leaders have maintained a positive ethos where pupils are happy and feel secure. Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and when they recognised that achievement was beginning to slip they took rapid and appropriate action.

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Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and increase the rate of progress for all pupils, but particularly more able pupils and in writing, by:
 - providing exciting and meaningful contexts, particularly for the younger age groups, so that pupils have well-planned opportunities to develop their language and communication skills
 - embedding the use of assessment information and giving all pupils work that is sufficiently challenging and matched to their individual needs
 - improving the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better and sharing the most effective practice in the school
 - planning more opportunities for pupils to work independently and develop their problem-solving skills.

- Improve the attendance, especially of persistent absentees, by:
 - implementing strategies to highlight the importance and rewards of regular attendance throughout the school and particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - building on the work of the family support team in partnership with other agencies.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Attainment at both Key Stages 1 and 2 is broadly average and pupils' progress is satisfactory. Most parents and carers hold more positive views about how well their children are achieving; however, attainment fell slightly last year mainly as a result of pupils not achieving at the higher levels, particularly in writing. The quality of learning in lessons is generally satisfactory and sometimes good. This is reflected in the school's attainment records and in the pupils' books which show that attainment is rising more rapidly this academic year.

Strategies such as individual targets for writing and mathematics are being used well to involve the pupils in evaluating their own learning. There are good examples of interesting practical work, such as the science experiments which took place in a Year 6 class during the inspection. Pupils worked well together investigating how sound travels, using correct vocabulary and thinking about their conclusions. In some classes, however, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to deepen and extend their learning, for example by developing their literacy and numeracy skills across other subjects and through problem-solving activities. As a result, too few pupils achieve at the higher levels. There are also inconsistencies in the presentation of pupils' work and this is reflected in the quality of teachers' own handwriting and

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presentation styles.

The school is currently implementing a new programme designed to enhance reading and writing skills. It is too early to judge the success of this, although pupils generally use phonic cues well to blend sounds together and decode unfamiliar words. A greater focus on improving writing is showing positive signs, but sometimes pupils are unfamiliar with the context and meaning of words and this restricts their learning. For example, in one class, pupils were asked to write sentences describing what a parrot might do but, as several had not seen or heard parrots, they were not able to draw on their own experiences.

The school uses assessment information well to provide a range of intervention and catch-up activities for individuals and groups and this enables most pupils to achieve the expectations for their ages. The well-planned additional support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they make slightly better progress than similar pupils elsewhere. This is also the case for pupils who are known to be entitled to free school meals.

Quality of teaching

The vast majority of parents and carers believe that teaching in the school is good and that their children are making good progress. The inspection evidence agreed with the senior leadership team's judgement that both were satisfactory. The majority of the teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory and about one third was good or better. Lessons are well organised with good relationships, clear routines and opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and discuss their learning. There is good evidence of teachers planning together to ensure consistency across classes in the same age groups. Teachers provide activities to match the different learning needs of pupils and the learning objectives for each lesson are usually clear. The teachers' understanding of pupils' levels and the next steps in learning varies between subjects so that sometimes the pitch is not quite right. Several lessons were observed where teachers were at the early stages of introducing a new programme and this may have slowed the pace more than usual as they found their way round unfamiliar materials.

In the best lessons pupils are actively involved throughout and teachers maintain a cracking pace, skilfully targeting questions at individuals and groups to probe and extend their learning. This was observed in a Year 6 English lesson where the teacher's questioning developed the pupils' understanding of metaphor and simile and opportunities for collaborative work resulted in some lively, descriptive writing. In some lessons, which were no more than satisfactory, the learning is restricted because of too much adult talk and close direction. The pupils' books suggest that, in some of the younger classes and in some subjects, such as French, there is an overuse of worksheets and this also puts limits on the learning. There are often opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning during lessons but there is more to do to provide richer learning experiences and to develop pupils' understanding of the

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world and their communication skills. Generally there are too few opportunities which challenge pupils to think for themselves and push themselves to achieve at higher levels.

Teachers mark pupils' books well, particularly in writing, giving helpful comments about what has been achieved and pointing out the next steps. There is good evidence of pupils responding to the marking by amending their work. There are inconsistencies in presentation, however, with pupils in several classes producing scruffy work with key vocabulary, for example in the learning objective, copied incorrectly and left unmarked. The introduction of individual targets in writing and, more recently, in mathematics is providing an impetus for pupil involvement and improvement.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes over time make a positive contribution to this safe, well-ordered and happy school. Almost all parents, carers and pupils who completed questionnaires supported the inspection team's observations that pupils are well behaved and feel safe and very well cared for. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and pupils are confident that any problems will be resolved quickly. They say that bullying is taken seriously and is rare. Parents and carers are also confident about the school's approach to behaviour and bullying. Two parents commented that when their children were bullied it was dealt with quickly and efficiently and that they were kept fully informed and involved. There are good opportunities, in lessons and assemblies, for the pupils to reflect on the school's values enshrined in the 'safe, potential, achieve, respect, kindness' spark awards. As a result, their social and moral development is good, they respect others and they have a clear understanding of how people should behave towards each other. Behaviour management systems are clear and well understood. In addition, effective support for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties results in marked improvements. There have been no permanent exclusions in recent years and fixed-term exclusions are relatively few and have decreased further this year.

Although most pupils attend school regularly, there is a relatively large group of pupils whose attendance is very poor. This means that, overall, attendance is far too low. The family support team works closely with individuals and their families and this usually leads to significant improvements. However, attendance in the youngest age groups remains low and is a cause for concern as these pupils are not getting into good attendance habits and their learning is being disrupted.

Leadership and management

The school has satisfactory capacity to ensure improvement. A strong, whole-school focus on personal and social development means that pupils develop good social and moral understanding. Good systems ensure that pupils are safe and happy. Although the focus on academic achievement has been less effective and attainment has

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dipped, action has been taken to address this. In September 2011, the headteacher returned to the school from his part-time support of another school due to the realisation of the leadership team that the school needed a greater drive for improvement. The senior leadership team is still below full strength due to the secondment of the Head of School and, as a result, several leaders have recently taken on wider roles. Despite this, senior leaders make a good contribution and there is a clear sense of purpose and direction, regular monitoring and a very sharp focus on raising attainment. As a result pupils' attainment and progress are improving. Senior leaders, including the governing body, have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Although milestones to evaluate the success of the school's improvement plan are not as clear as they might be, the school's targets for improvement demonstrate high expectations.

During the inspection there were few occasions when there was real excitement in learning or opportunities for pupils to probe more deeply into ideas. However, they talked with enthusiasm about activities such as theatre visits, themed events and opportunities to learn about different cultures and reflect on important issues. The curriculum is very focused on literacy and numeracy which reflects the aim of raising attainment but reduces the time spent on other subjects. The school is currently developing the curriculum plan and there is more to do to make effective links between learning across subjects and provide greater opportunities to practise literacy and mathematics skills in a range of contexts. The use of pupils' individual targets is being consistently implemented across the school. Pupils are developing an understanding of their own learning and their next steps. They are motivated to achieve their targets and are very proud of their red target books.

Most of the parents and carers who returned questionnaires feel that they are kept fully informed and that the school responds well to their concerns. Regular communication, class assemblies and workshops are used by the school to engage parents and carers in the life of the school and support their children's learning. The school is strongly committed to promoting equality and tackling discrimination and arrangements for safeguarding are securely in place. Attainment trends are analysed to ensure that all groups achieve equally and barriers to learning are reduced. For example, pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are given time and support to deal with and understand their feelings and emotions. Several parents and carers took the opportunity to comment on how well the school meets their children's needs and helps them to overcome specific difficulties.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Manor Community Primary School, Swanscombe, DA10 0BU

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when inspectors visited your school recently to find out how well you were doing. What you and your parents and carers told us helped when we were thinking about our findings. After having a very close look at all sorts of things, including coming into lots of your lessons, we think that your school is satisfactory.

Over the last few years the school has changed a lot. You have had to get used to a new building and the number of pupils has increased. During that time the adults have worked hard to make sure that you are safe, happy and well cared for. Those of you who need extra help receive good support. Your behaviour is good and you know how to stay safe. Well done! By the end of Year 6, most of you achieve similar levels to pupils in other schools, although last year, things started to slip a bit and not enough of you achieved at the higher levels, especially in writing.

We think, and we know your headteacher agrees with us, that you could achieve even better. We have asked the teachers to share their good ideas, make the learning more interesting and give you more opportunities to improve your speaking, listening and thinking skills. We have also asked them to make sure the work is just right for you: not too hard and, especially, not too easy. We think you would rise to the challenge if you had more opportunities to use your own ideas and more chances to solve problems. Most of you come to school every day but there are quite a lot of you who have too many days off and this means that attendance at your school is lower than most other schools. We have asked the school to look for different ways of improving attendance. It is particularly important for the youngest of you to get into the habit of coming to school every day.

Thank you again for helping us and good luck for the next chapter in your school's story.

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald
Her Majesty's Inspector

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