

Manor Court Community Primary School

Duck Lane, Chard, Somerset TA20 2ES

Inspection dates

4–5 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time governors have not held senior leaders sufficiently to account. Their ability to identify areas of strength and weakness has been limited. As a result, outcomes for pupils have not been good enough over recent years.
- Middle leaders do not make rigorous checks on the performance of key groups. As a result, the progress of some pupils stalls.
- Until recently, leaders have not provided teachers with sufficient guidance to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Attendance is below the national average. Too many pupils are persistently absent from school.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation are not consistently high. As a result, pupils do not always demonstrate pride in their work.
- The curriculum does not support pupils' good development of knowledge, understanding and skills, particularly in history and geography.
- Leaders do not ensure that additional funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, too many disadvantaged pupils are not making enough progress.
- Teachers do not use assessment information consistently well to inform their expectations of what pupils can or cannot do. Too few pupils work at age-related expectations. In addition, the most able are not challenged enough, limiting the number of pupils reaching the higher standards they are capable of.
- Leaders do not yet have a detailed overview of the effectiveness of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and more effective external support have raised expectations across the school. Outcomes are improving.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is good. Pupils are polite and courteous throughout the school day.
- The early years provision is a strength. Leaders' effective actions are improving outcomes of key groups.
- The teaching of reading is rapidly improving. Pupils have positive attitudes towards reading and speak passionately about their favourite books.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact and effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, by making sure that:
 - governors hold senior leaders fully to account for improving pupils' outcomes
 - all leaders carry out rigorous checks on attendance
 - all leaders carry out rigorous checks on the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on raising pupils' outcomes
 - middle leaders carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively to ensure that pupils gain knowledge, understanding and skills in all areas of the curriculum especially in history and geography
 - leaders have a clear understanding of the impact of interventions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the progress they make.
- Improve outcomes for all groups of pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by making sure that teachers:
 - have consistently high expectations for pupils
 - make effective use of ongoing assessments to pitch work correctly so that pupils, particularly the most able, make good progress
 - adapt lessons to meet the emerging needs of pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The multi-academy trust has previously been too slow to respond to declining outcomes. Since September 2016, the trust has provided effective support to senior leaders in identifying the school's key priorities and beginning to address pupils' underachievement.
- Leaders have focused on improving standards in reading, writing and mathematics but recognise that standards are not good enough across the curriculum. Pupils have access to an appropriate range of subjects. However, work in pupils' books confirm that progress across the curriculum is variable, particularly in history and geography.
- In the past, leaders have not provided enough support to improve the quality of teaching. Since September 2016, the head of school improvement has supported the school to gather an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and appropriate support plans are now in place.
- Funding for pupils who have special needs and/or disabilities is being used to support some increasingly effective interventions. Recent support from the trust has enabled the new leader for special educational needs to have a clearer understanding of the needs of the pupils in the school. However, leaders have not yet evaluated the effectiveness of provision for these pupils on a regular basis to ensure that the support continues to bring about rapid improvement.
- Leaders have not robustly tracked and monitored the impact the pupil premium grant has on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in key stages 1 and 2. A recent comprehensive review of pupil premium spending has accurately identified priorities to improve outcomes. However, in the early years, leaders' monitoring is robust. In the Reception class, teachers carefully check children's progress to ensure that disadvantaged children make the progress they should.
- Leaders, including middle leaders, have not provided precise support for teachers to ensure that pupils' progress is consistently strong across the school. However, the new headteacher has motivated middle leaders to lead in their subject areas. They have well-designed plans to improve standards and have introduced a consistent approach to teaching reading, writing and mathematics. For example, leaders' increased focus on developing reasoning and problem-solving is providing increased challenge for pupils.
- The newly appointed headteacher has acted promptly to increase pupils' awareness of modern British values. Activities such as school elections have supported pupils' understanding of democracy. The student council also raised money for a local charity by holding a Year 6 production.
- The headteacher has acted swiftly to galvanise staff across the school and share his vision. He has raised expectations of pupils' outcomes and their behaviour. As a result, the staff team is working cohesively to achieve better outcomes for pupils.
- Historically, leaders have not made effective use of the additional sport premium funding. However, over the last year, the subject leader for physical education (PE) has increased sporting participation, raised the profile of competitive sports and brought in

additional resources to improve the provision of PE. Leaders have correctly identified the need to increase access to extra-curricular activities and have completed a comprehensive plan to further engage pupils in a range of sporting activities during the next academic year.

- New leaders and the head of school improvement have focused on improving the accuracy of assessments and now compare these against relevant national expectations for each age group. This has ensured that leaders have a more accurate understanding of the school's performance and they can evaluate the performance of individual pupils.
- New leaders have quickly promoted higher expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils demonstrate much improved behaviour across the school. For example, there is a marked reduction in the number of incidents of poor behaviour over the course of this academic year.

Governance

- Governors receive information from the headteacher but do not yet hold leaders robustly to account. Until recently, the roles and responsibilities of the governing body have not been clear and governors have been slow to address underachievement. Consequently, this compromised the reviewing of statutory policies and governors' ability to monitor specific areas of the school. The interim executive board has acted decisively to commission more effective support since September. School improvement support has been reviewed and revised, and has quickly tackled inadequacies in leadership and teaching.
- The chair of the interim executive board is effectively managing the transition from that board to the shadow governing body. Consequently, governors now have a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities and have identified where greater attention is needed.
- The chair of the interim executive board and head of school improvement have gathered an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are establishing systems to monitor improvements. This work has not yet had a significant impact on pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The shadow governing body is showing a greater understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. For example, governors are checking children's outcomes against national benchmarks in the early years.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Historically, records for pupils who attend part time have not been sufficiently rigorous in managing transitions to a full-time timetable. As a result, these pupils have not been well supported in attending school and subsequently their progress has stalled.
- Leaders have recently improved the clarity of safeguarding records so that they can quickly identify any patterns that might suggest that a child is at risk of harm, and can then act.

- Leaders have responded swiftly to implement the safeguarding procedures initiated by the trust. Consequently, checks to ensure that staff are recruited safely are in place. Governors now demonstrate the awareness of the 'Prevent' duty to counter extremism and radicalisation, and they have completed appropriate risk assessments.
- The designated safeguarding lead is proactive when making referrals and accessing early help. Staff are aware of how to communicate concerns about pupils. Leaders' work with external agencies has resulted in a strong culture of keeping children safe.
- Leaders and teachers make sure that pupils know what to do if they have any worries. Pupils know of the importance of keeping safe. As a member of the student council stated, 'We talk about things to make the school better, and safeguarding because that's really important.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are not consistently good across classes and subjects. Teachers are too often slow to use ongoing assessments to adapt their teaching to match the needs of pupils. In some cases teachers act to provide feedback that encourages pupils to take the next steps in their learning. However, in too many cases, teachers do not act promptly to adapt the activities to better meet pupils' needs.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of pupils across the school. For example, pupils' poor presentation and basic errors are left unchecked. As a result, misconceptions become embedded and pupils' progress stalls.
- Teaching does not develop the skills, knowledge and understanding in history and geography as well as in English, mathematics and science. Work in books confirms that pupils do not consistently exhibit the knowledge and skills in these subjects appropriate for their age.
- The teaching of mathematics is inconsistent across the school. In some lessons, pupils are engaged and teachers support pupils to make meaningful links to apply their mathematical skills to real-life contexts.
- Teachers do not match work well to the needs of pupils based on what pupils already know. Some pupils are given work that is too easy. Consequently pupils, especially the most able, are not sufficiently challenged which impacts on pupil progress.
- The success of teachers' deployment of adults in lessons remains too variable. In some instances, effective questioning by adults guides pupils to make progress within lessons. However, this practice is not yet school-wide.
- The teaching of reading has led to pupils developing a love of reading. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors. At playtimes, some pupils take books out to the playground and share these books with their peers.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Leaders' implementation of the newly established behaviour policy has helped to create a calm atmosphere in classrooms which allows pupils to learn in a safe and happy environment.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- In the Year 6 production of William Shakespeare's 'The Tempest', pupils demonstrated confidence on stage and sang and acted with enjoyment and expression. A large number of parents attended to show support for their children. They were clearly proud of what they saw.
- Pupils are satisfied that poor behaviour is dealt with. They say that they feel safe, particularly since the introduction of the new headteacher. However, parents offer mixed responses to the way school deals with behaviour. The school monitors incidents of behaviour closely. These have reduced considerably in frequency and severity.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have a good understanding of democracy. The student council is active and has made contributions towards the school and the wider community – for example, in organising charity fundraising and canvassing their peers' opinions about the school's play equipment. As a result, the representatives feel valued and that they play a pivotal role in the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Where teaching is not challenging enough, some pupils lose interest. They do not develop sufficiently positive attitudes to learning. This results in pupils not taking enough pride in their work and they do not make the progress they should.
- Although improving, pupils' attendance remains below the national average for all pupils. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced but still remains high. Leaders have put in place systems to track pupils' attendance more robustly but it is too soon to see any significant impact.
- Pupils' conduct around the school has greatly improved. Pupils are courteous to one another and demonstrate a high level of care and understanding, particularly when their peers are upset or need support.
- The atmosphere around the school is calm and orderly. Teachers have increasingly high expectations of pupils' conduct. Pupils are responding well to this. Consequently, pupils now move calmly around the school and adults manage transitions between lessons well.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils have been too low over time. Too few pupils are currently making good progress from their starting points. In 2016, the progress in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average. Although outcomes for pupils are improving, particularly at the end of key stage 2, too many pupils across the school are not reaching age-related expectations.

- In 2016, the progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was in the bottom 10% nationally. More recently, leaders have ensured that these pupils have detailed plans and support in place. Consequently, these pupils are beginning to make better progress. However, this is not yet consistent across the school.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have not improved quickly enough. Together with external support, the new headteacher has recently reviewed the use of the pupil premium funding. As a result, teachers are more aware of disadvantaged pupils and in some year groups these pupils are catching up with their peers. For example, in Year 6 in reading and mathematics.
- Too few pupils are achieving at the highest standards. Leaders have introduced new initiatives to improve access to greater challenge but this is not yet embedded. Consequently, most-able pupils often complete learning that is too easy and their progress slows.
- Work in pupils' books over the three months since April 2017 reflects significantly improved standards. Work is better matched to pupils' needs. In addition, pupils' presentation has started to improve as a result of teachers' increased level of expectations but overall remains inconsistent.
- Pupils with lower starting points are beginning to receive more effective support. Teachers and adults are increasingly aware of their emerging needs and beginning to provide interventions to improve their progress. As a result, these pupils are starting to catch up with the expected standards for their age.
- In 2016, the number of Year 1 pupils who reached the expected standard in the national phonics screening check was above the national average. The current tracking shows that the number of pupils reaching this standard has fallen this year. However, across the school, pupils are showing an increased confidence and enjoyment of reading.
- The number of children in the early years achieving a good level of development has been at or above the national average in recent years. Leaders provide closely matched activities to meet the varying needs of children. As a result, children's progress from their different starting points is strong.

Early years provision

Good

- Staff provide well-matched activities to children's needs and interests. Adults have high expectations of children, make constant refinements to adapt activities to children's needs and know the next steps needed to secure individual progress.
- The leaders have established effective links with the school's early years centre to ensure that assessment systems are consistent. Leaders share practice and have forged strong relationships. As a result, assessments are accurate for those children starting Reception and adults support these children well and build on what children can already do.

- Adults offer support which enables children to apply their phonics skills well when reading. Children demonstrate an eagerness to read and do this with great expression and confidence. As a result, an increasing proportion of children are reaching a higher standard.
- The early years pupil premium funding is used effectively. Adults monitor disadvantaged pupils closely, tracking their progress and providing high-quality interventions. As a result, an increased number of disadvantaged children achieve a good level of development.
- Children are safe. Adults promote a strong safeguarding culture and risk assessments are comprehensive. Children are well looked after and relationships with adults are positive. Safeguarding is effective.
- Governors have invested in a new outdoor provision in order to improve the environment for children. This newly developed area is well resourced and effectively managed so that children are learning and applying a range of skills across the curriculum.
- Although increasing, few children exceed in the writing early learning goal. Children have the phonics knowledge needed to write with accuracy but are not regularly challenged to extend their writing into producing a series of sentences.
- Leaders welcome parental contributions to their child's progress through assessment using a web-based interactive program. Consequently, parents are well informed about the progress their child makes.

School details

Unique reference number	139385
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10033116

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	381
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Matt Reed
Headteacher	Luke Talmage
Telephone number	01460 62350
Website	www.manorcourt.somerset.sch.uk
Email address	sch.091@educ.somerset.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 March 2015

Information about this school

- Manor Court Community Primary School became a sponsored academy of the Collaborative Academies Trust on 1 April 2013. The current headteacher has been in role since April 2017.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of specified information on its website on the use of sport premium funding, publication of the curriculum, governors' information and duties, and statutory policies such as its equality policy.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish on the use of sport premium funding, the publication of the curriculum, governors' information and duties, and its equality policy.
- The school does not meet the government's floor standards.
- There is an interim executive board in place for the school. A transition is under way to hand over responsibilities to the shadow local governing body. The chair of the interim executive board will remain as chair of the local governing body when the transition is complete.

complete.

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- There is an early years centre on the school site, managed by the governing body. This was also inspected.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium funding is higher than the national average. The trust recently commissioned a review of the expenditure of the pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classes across the school, some jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, head of school improvement, senior and middle leaders, and the chair of the interim executive board. In addition, the inspectors met with the school's special educational needs coordinator, the leader of physical education and the early years leader.
- Inspectors scrutinised several documents, including minutes from governance meetings, school improvement plans and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work in their books to establish the current quality of pupils' work and progress over time.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and spoke to groups of pupils to seek their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- An inspector conducted a walk around the school with pupils to look at curriculum displays, the promotion of British values and to find out how they feel about their learning.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of parents and considered 24 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the school's own survey results. There were no staff or pupil responses to their online questionnaires.

Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracy Hannon	Her Majesty's Inspector
Abi Staff	Ofsted Inspector
Dawn Breeze	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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