

Mandeville Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	117142
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	395425
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2012
Lead inspector	Nina Bee

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	312
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rosemary Harrington-Lynn
Headteacher	Amanda Godfrey
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2008
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Nina Bee	Additional Inspector
Gillian Scobie	Additional Inspector
Mehar Brar	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 17 parts of lessons taught by 13 teachers. Discussions were held with staff, pupils, representatives from the governing body and a representative from the local authority. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including teachers' planning and the school development plan along with other documents, particularly those related to safeguarding. Responses to questionnaires from 78 parents and carers were analysed along with nine from staff and 93 from pupils.

Information about the school

Mandeville is a larger than the average-sized primary school. Approximately one-third of pupils come from Bangladeshi backgrounds. Just under one-third of the pupils come from White British backgrounds with the remainder coming from a range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs is above average for those at school action and below average for those on school action plus or in possession of a statement for special educational need. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The number of pupils entering and leaving the school other than at the usual time during the year is higher than normal. There is a breakfast club and an after-school club which are managed by the governing body. The school meets the current floor standards, set by the government as the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. Since the previous inspection the school has achieved the ICT (Becta) award, Healthy Schools award, the Gold Travel award, and the National Support School/ National Leader Award.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school where attitudes to learning are good and achievement and attainment are improving. As a result, pupils enjoy school and attendance is high. The impressive range of intervention programmes offered to pupils enables them to overcome difficulties with their learning. Parents and carers appreciate this provision. The school is not yet outstanding because teaching and the curriculum, although good, are not ensuring that all pupils make sufficiently rapid progress so that their achievement is outstanding
- Attainment has improved at the end of Reception from below to broadly typical outcomes for their ages. Attainment has risen from below to broadly average at the end of Year 2 and 6. Pupils in the current Year 6 have made rapid progress over the key stage, with attainment average in writing and above average in reading and mathematics. This represents outstanding achievement for this group of students although achievement is good overall, with some variation reflecting inconsistencies in teaching.
- Most teaching is good. At times, satisfactory teaching includes activities that do not challenge pupils of all abilities; or too little guidance is given on how to improve, both during lessons and in marking of written work. In some lessons there is insufficient emphasis on improving the quality of writing, for example, writing letters with the correct formation, using capital letters properly or spelling words correctly. This includes, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, occasions where adults missed opportunities to get all children off to a good start in learning how to write letters correctly.
- Behaviour is usually good. Almost all pupils say they feel safe in school and that adults deal effectively with any issues. Sun safety is not always sufficiently promoted.
- The school is well led by the headteacher, with good support from senior staff and middle managers. Monitoring of teaching does not focus enough on the quality of learning. Consequently, there are variations in pupils' learning and achievement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so that lessons are consistently good and outstanding by:
 - always ensuring that pupils are told what they need to do to improve, both during lessons and in the marking of their work
 - focusing more sharply on developing writing skills, both during literacy lessons and across the curriculum
 - monitoring lessons with a sharper focus on pupils' learning and ensuring that all teachers have clear points for improvement.
- Improve aspects of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that when children begin to write recognisable letters and numbers they are taught to write them properly with the correct formation
 - considering school policy and practice with regard to sun protection.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Almost all parents and carers who returned questionnaires feel that their children are making good progress. Children begin school with attainment below that expected for their ages but particularly low for communication, language and literacy and their personal, social and emotional development. They make a good start in the Nursery Class which is built upon for those children who continue to Reception so that they leave with attainment that is generally typical for their ages. This represents good achievement. In Key Stages 1 and 2, achievement is also good overall, but with some variation reflecting inconsistency in the quality of teaching, ranging from outstanding to satisfactory. Pupils in the current Year 6 have made outstanding progress because of the high quality of teaching they have received and more pupils than in previous years are on course to reaching higher levels. Mobility has been high in this group and pupils who have joined the school since Year 2 have also made outstanding progress. Good learning was seen in a Year 2 class as pupils learnt to solve number problems. The lesson moved at a fast pace and the teaching assistant contributed effectively to the learning through the support given to individual pupils. A key factor in the success of the lesson was the very effective checking of pupils' understanding so that any misconceptions were recognised and pupils were moved on as soon as they were ready; they responded with enthusiasm.

Pupils who speak English as an additional language have their levels of language acquisition carefully identified and they achieve well because they are sensitively supported in all they do. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs usually achieve well because their needs are effectively met through activities carefully matched to meet their needs. There is no evidence to suggest that there are any differences in the achievement of different ethnic groups.

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There are good procedures and practices to support pupils whose reading ages are lower than their chronological age. School performance information shows that attainment, in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly average in Year 2 but higher in mathematics and reading. Pupils' reading levels are carefully checked and those with low reading ages receive particularly good support to enable them to improve their reading skills.

Quality of teaching

Children learn effectively in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are taught well whether they are taking part in adult-focused activities or interacting with adults during activities which they choose themselves. Children who speak English as an additional language receive good quality support from bilingual teaching assistants. The environment, both inside and out, is secure and welcoming. All activities are well resourced to support learning. Inside, children were observed as they investigated how to make 'Beebots', programmable toys, move. Adults extended learning effectively, for example skilful questioning enabled all children to learn well. Good behaviour and cooperation were observed, outside, as children played alongside each other in the Pirates House, excitedly looking for treasure. They have good opportunities to develop a love of reading by listening to stories or looking at books themselves. Children confidently use pencils and pens although, when they start to write recognisable letters, they do not always have enough guidance to learn how to write letters properly.

As pupils move through Years 1 to 6, teachers usually have high expectations relating to the learning and behaviour of their pupils. Good lessons are enhanced by teachers skilfully asking questions to extend and check learning. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are usually effectively supported by teaching assistants. Suitable activities are given to those who speak English as an additional language to reinforce and develop language and enable them to learn well. Information and communications technology (ICT) is used effectively to support learning and stimulate interest. Subject-specific vocabulary is extended successfully and pupils have good opportunities to talk to a partner to draft responses before they answer the teacher. In the lessons judged satisfactory, weaker features of teaching included not checking during the lesson that everyone fully understands what they are doing, or informing them what they need to do to improve. At times, lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, are given tasks which are too difficult and they do not do as well as they should. No disruptive behaviour was seen during lessons. However, at times, pupils of all abilities have difficulty staying focused when activities are not well matched to their individual needs.

The best marking contains comments which clearly tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work. This practice is not consistent across the school. In particular, marking is not systematic in informing pupils what they need to do to improve their writing skills, for example handwriting, the use of capital letters and spelling. Almost

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all parents and carers who returned questionnaires feel that their children are taught well. A few pupils feel that they do not always know how well they are doing and that they are not always shown what they need to do to improve their work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The youngest children in the school develop good social skills, positive attitudes to learning and behave well in and around school. These qualities are sustained as pupils move up the school because all adults have high expectations regarding behaviour. As a result, behaviour is good and exclusions are rare. There was very little evidence of bullying. A small number of racist incidents have been reported, which are shown by evidence including the views of parents and carers to have been dealt with effectively. There are well organised systems to record incidents of poor behaviour with only a few recorded in the last academic year. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers feel that their children are safe in school and almost all pupils agree. Although there is clear policy in place, at times, sun safety is not effectively promoted when children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are allowed out in the hot sun without sunhats.

Leadership and management

Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, the school has been successful in improving pupils' achievement. A remaining area for development is the monitoring of teaching, which is not rigorous enough because it does not focus adequately on learning, particularly on the performance of different groups of pupils. Self-evaluation is generally accurate and clearly identifies priorities for further improvement. All staff are involved in school improvement planning and have good opportunities to be involved in continuing professional development. Senior and middle leaders work very effectively to develop staff awareness in their subject areas. Under the very clear direction from the headteacher, all are involved in collecting and analysing data related to the areas they are responsible for and have been involved in monitoring pupils' performance. All pupil groups succeed because equal opportunities are effectively promoted through rigorous monitoring of their achievement and personal needs; discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The very effective governing body has a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is fully involved in the school's work. Consequently it is equipped to support and challenge when necessary. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. Policies and procedures are secure and promote pupils' safety, albeit on this occasion the policy on sun protection was not put into practice. Pupils say that they are safe in school.

Pupils' personal and social needs are well catered for through the personal, social and health education programme and regular opportunities to attend nurture groups and learn outside in a nearby environmental area. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is well promoted in all the school does. Pupils from a wide range of different backgrounds mix well, are usually kind towards each other and respect each other's cultures. Parents wrote that they were delighted with the way

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the school celebrates cultural diversity. The curriculum is good and enables most pupils to make at least good progress. It is well organised to meet the needs and interests of all pupil groups. Pupils have very good opportunities to take part in visits and interact with exciting visitors who are invited into school. These greatly enrich their experiences. The breakfast club and after-school club are valuable resources which provide pupils with structured activities. Adults and pupils get on well with each other and behave well as they develop social skills in a safe and calm environment.

Since the school was last inspected it has continued to develop well. The headteacher, her staff and governors have recently been involved in a major extension and refurbishment of the school which has involved upheavals and disruptions to teaching areas and the work of the school. Managing this, together with the good team spirit which is evident, the continued strong focus on pupils' achievement and promotion of their well-being, shows the school's strong capacity to improve further.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



28 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mandeville Primary School, St Albans, AL1 2LE

Thank you for the help you gave when we came to visit your school, particularly those who came to talk to us and those who filled in questionnaires. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to your thoughts about the school. You will be pleased to know that we think that you go to a good school.

These are the best things we found out about your school.

- The children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a good start.
- Teaching is good and this enables most of you to learn well.
- The levels you reach by the end of Year 6 are improving.
- Those of you who find learning difficult have very good opportunities to take part in interesting programmes which really help you.
- The staff plan very exciting visits out of school and invite exciting people to come in, such as the mountain bike experts, to make learning extremely interesting.

We have asked school leaders to do a few things to improve the school further.

- Make sure that you all receive the best possible teaching and that teachers check that you all know what you need to do to improve your work, particularly in relation to improving your writing skills.
- Make sure that when children in Nursery and Reception start to write recognisable letters, they are shown how to write them properly.
- Although you are well looked after and cared for, make sure that you are protected from the sun on very hot days.

We hope you all continue to work hard in your lovely new surroundings.

Yours sincerely

Nina Bee
Lead inspector

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