

Manland Primary School

Sauncey Avenue, Harpenden, AL5 4QW

Inspection dates 6–7 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Manland is a happy and welcoming school. It is well-ordered with a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Senior leaders model professional standards well and have high expectations of teachers and pupils.
- Pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, make consistently good progress in English and accelerated progress in mathematics due to effective school improvement strategies.
- In the most recent tests at the end of Key Stage 2 pupils achieved high standards. They develop confidence in speaking and build wide vocabularies. Their writing is particularly strong.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is very well organised and activities are carefully planned to match children’s individual needs. Children settle in quickly, enjoying and persevering with activities and make good progress.
- Teaching is typically good and some is outstanding. Good relationships have been established and classes are managed well. Displays in classrooms support pupils’ learning well.
- Teachers plan interesting activities, generally making good use of pupils’ previous learning, and marking pupils’ written work frequently. They often use skilful questioning and deploy their well-trained teaching assistants effectively to support learning.
- Pupils feel safe, are proud of their school, like their teachers and enjoy learning. They behave well and get along well with one another in both work and play. Attendance is above average.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching rigorously and follow pupils’ progress closely. Extra support is used effectively to ensure the good progress of every pupil.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always give pupils work that is hard enough.
- Pupils are not given enough time to reflect on teachers’ constructive advice in comments in marking.
- Pupils do not make as rapid progress in reading as they do in writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons or parts of lessons, including seven joint observations with senior school leaders. They also looked at pupils' written work and displays in classrooms and corridors.
- Meetings were held with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher and other school leaders and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils and informally with other pupils in lessons and around the school. An inspector listened to pupils reading and discussed their reading habits with them.
- Inspectors examined several of the school's documents. These included: the school's own evaluation of its performance and its improvement plan; the school's information about pupils' progress; the support given to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs; evidence about the quality of teaching; and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of 100 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), together with the views expressed by parents as they arrived at school to pick up their children. Also, 34 questionnaires returned by staff were analysed.

Inspection team

James McVeigh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Josephine Lewis

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Manland is an average-sized primary school. There is one class in each year group from Reception to Year 6 except in Year 1, which has two classes.
- The large majority of pupils come from a White British background and the remainder from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds. There are fewer pupils than average who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and other groups) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action and the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below the national averages.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding and raise achievement further by:
 - making sure that pupils are given regular opportunities to reflect on and act upon teachers' constructive comments to improve their work
 - ensuring that teachers always plan activities that will stretch all groups of pupils so they make rapid and sustained progress.
- Accelerate the progress pupils make in reading by placing an in-depth focus on improving their comprehension skills during guided reading sessions.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress and achieve high standards. Children start school in the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are above those typical for their age. They settle quickly in the well organised and caring environment and make good progress through well focused activities that engage them well.
- Transition into Year 1 is well organised and pupils continue to make good progress. By the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils reach standards in English and mathematics that are above the national averages. The standards that pupils attain by the time they leave school have been improving steadily in English over the last three years and following a dip in 2012 rose again in mathematics to previous high levels. In 2013, standards were well above national figures. The proportions of pupils in Year 6 who exceeded the expected progress were higher than found nationally in mathematics and in writing, and similar to that found nationally in reading.
- Pupils develop extensive vocabularies and speak with confidence. The school successfully helps pupils develop above-average skills in writing, providing ample opportunities for them to write in a variety of styles and in a good number of subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 create persuasive texts in English, Year 4 pupils produce information leaflets about Anglo-Saxons in Information Communication Technology and Reception children are introduced to hard words like 'carnivore' and 'ravenous' as they learn about dinosaurs.
- Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught well. The results of the last two national phonics screening checks in Year 1 were above the national average. Pupils become fluent readers. They read regularly and parents are given advice on how to support their children in developing confident reading skills. Although pupils achieve well in reading, their achievement is not as good as in writing. Support for reading in school does not focus enough on developing comprehension skills.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide extra support for eligible pupils, for example through small group work and giving access to enrichment activities. The school tracks the progress of these pupils closely to make sure they continue to make good progress. In 2013, the few eligible pupils reached higher standards than seen nationally in English and mathematics. They did not do as well as their peers in school, although the gap has narrowed to around the equivalent of half a term in both English and mathematics.
- The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language make as good and sometimes better progress than their peers in school.
- The school accurately identifies disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those who are gifted and talented and all make good progress. This is because teachers and teaching assistants provide well-targeted extra support and, for the highly able pupils, extra challenge outside lessons, including involving a local secondary school.
- High ability pupils do as well as similar pupils nationally in reading but better than them in writing and mathematics. Despite, their good achievement, occasionally the progress of the most able is impeded because teachers do not inject enough challenge into the activities they are set.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good and is sometimes outstanding. The quality of teaching has improved in recent years due to rigorous monitoring and effective sharing of good practice. Learning is

often based on pupils' experience. For example, pupils in Year 6 were developing their understanding of persuasive text well by creating brochures to entice people to holiday at a residential centre that they had recently visited.

- Teachers have established good relationships with pupils and manage behaviour calmly and with little fuss. Pupils are engaged by the tasks that teachers set and persevere with them. For example, Year 2 pupils were engrossed in finding all the combinations of given coins that would make a specific value.
- In lessons, teachers explain clearly how to carry out tasks and what they expect pupils to be able to do at the end of the lesson. When reviewing progress in lessons, they refer pupils back to learning objectives and encourage discussion between pupils to evaluate how well they have done giving them greater responsibility for their own learning. Teachers often use skilful questioning to make pupils think harder and correct misunderstandings. They make good use of display to celebrate pupils' work and support learning.
- Activities in the Reception are planned extremely well each week to build on children's earlier learning and stimulate their imagination. Children are encouraged effectively to participate in all activities and to investigate and explore. For example children were thoroughly engaged in exploring the outdoor area, including digging in mud, while using a checklist to search for 'dinosaurs'.
- Reception-age children have ample opportunities to practise crucial skills in literacy and numeracy both in the classroom and in outdoor activities. Staff monitor children's progress closely and use carefully directed questions to extend their learning further.
- Support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs works well. A range of interventions are in place, such as one-to-one and small group work and specialised software programmes to assist learning. Extra training has been provided for teaching assistants, who are skilled in providing well-targeted support for pupils. Targets for progress on pupils' individual education plans are updated every half term to ensure support is effective.
- Teachers mark pupils work regularly and in detail, pointing out what they have done well and, sometimes, what they should do next to improve. Pupils understand the marking strategy but are not always given enough opportunities to respond to written advice.
- Teachers are consistent in their approach to planning. Pupils find lessons interesting and are eager to learn. They often have a choice of tasks of differing difficulty. However, teachers do not always plan activities that will stretch all pupils so that some do not always make as much progress as they should.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils like their teachers and enjoy learning. They are happy at school and feel valued and well cared for. They say that teachers and teachers' assistants readily help them if they get stuck. One pupil in Year 6 explained how she was helped to catch up with work after being ill for a short period.
- Pupils are proud of their school and willingly take on extra responsibilities, for example, as eco-committee members, house captains and school council representative. Last year, pupils helped to run the school's successful stationery shop, a role suggested by the school council.
- Pupils understand how the school's behaviour management system works and know that their

behaviour affects their progress. Pupils cooperate well with one another in lessons, collaborating effectively in group work and whilst discussing ideas with one another. For example, pupils in a Year 4 mathematics lesson played a 'rapid fire' game about multiplication sensibly, even though they were excited and found it great fun.

- Occasionally, pupils lose focus when introductions go on too long or they are not moved on to harder work quickly enough.
- Pupils behave considerately to others when moving around the school and at playtimes. They know about the playground 'buddy bench' and would ask anyone sitting there to play with them. They say that unkind behaviour is not common. Pupils enjoy 'buddy days' where they spend time helping younger pupils.
- Pupils have learned about bullying and its different forms. They say they have rarely seen any bullying and when they tell adults it is sorted out quickly. Parents, governors and staff agree that pupils' behaviour is good. From school records, there have been few incidents of misbehaviour over the last three years and the isolated incidents were resolved appropriately.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and healthy. For example, they know about road safety and how to stay safe on the internet following a visit from a theatrical group who promoted this aspect. They have learned how to plan a healthy diet and about the need to keep active.
- The school constantly stresses the need for regular attendance and pupils' attendance has been above average over the last few years.

The leadership and management are good

- Manland is led and managed well. Senior leaders know the strengths and areas for development of their school. Development planning is highly focused and effective. Their well-thought out plan following the previous inspection has brought about significant improvement in pupils' achievement and improved the quality of teaching. The school is well placed to continue moving forward.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders act as good role models for staff and pupils alike. They have ensured that the school is orderly and with a friendly, caring and purposeful atmosphere. Other leaders provide strong support, particularly in providing for pupils who are disabled or with special educational needs and in ensuring children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress.
- The school checks on pupils' progress closely and analyses this information to ensure all groups of pupils are making good progress. Reviewing progress in this way enables senior leaders to assess the impact of new initiatives and hold teachers to account for how well pupils do. Well-targeted support is provided for any pupils who are under-achieving to get them back on track quickly.
- Leaders make robust checks on the quality of teaching by observing lessons and by scrutinising pupils' work and teachers' planning. Teachers are set clear targets for improvement, including raising pupils' achievement and these are usefully linked to the school's improvement plan.
- Appropriate training is available for individual teachers' needs and the regular staff meetings revolve around improving teaching and learning so that more is outstanding. Teachers new to the profession are well supported by in-school mentors; further training courses and visits to

outstanding schools. Senior leaders themselves continue to learn and gain valuable experience, for example, by observing teaching in other schools.

- The school provides a broad and balanced range of subjects that develop pupils' communication, language and mathematical skills well. Topics are well planned to appeal to pupils' interests, for example, through topic days like 'Roman Britain' that stimulate pupils' imagination with role play and practical activities.
- Information Communication technology resources are used regularly to support learning well in all subject areas. For example, pupils can work independently on mathematics programmes about multiplication, research topics in geography or log temperature changes and use spreadsheets in science.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through a wide range of clubs, trips out, assemblies, charitable endeavours and visitors to the school, such as artists for 'French and Art' week. The school makes good use of the wide range of pupils' backgrounds to share different cultural experiences. For example, pupils have learned about Japanese culture and Indian dancing from visiting parents.
- Most parents say there is excellent communication and liaison with school and express great confidence in the leadership. They know how well their children are doing and how they can help them at home. Parents are kept well-informed about school activities, for example, through the school's attractive and informative website and the regular newsletters from the Reception team. The home/ school association is very active in supporting the school, particularly in raising funds.
- The school is fully committed to inclusion and ensures there is equality of opportunity for all and no discrimination. For example, it provides well-targeted support to make sure all pupils make good progress.
- The primary sports funding is being used effectively to improve the quality of teaching, particularly in dance and gymnastics, to ensure pupils are more active and to generate a life-long love of sport.
- The local authority shares the school's own evaluation of itself as good and provides a useful external assessment of the quality of the school's work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body exhibits a good range of relevant skills. These have been augmented by further training for example, to understand information about school performance, following a review. Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching and how well pupils are doing. Apart from regular reports from the headteacher and deputy headteacher, governors interview subject leaders and visit classes to see lessons and speak to pupils. They ask challenging questions about the quality of the school's work and its impact on pupils' achievement.
 - Governors have worked effectively with senior leaders, staff, parents and pupils to develop a common vision and the schools' aims. They are closely involved in developing the school improvement plan. They are involved in setting challenging targets for the headteacher and make sure that teachers are rewarded appropriately for meeting their performance targets. The governing body ensures sound financial decisions are made, for example, that the pupil premium is used effectively to raise achievement. All statutory arrangements for safeguarding are securely in place.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	117103
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	425245

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 of pupils on the school roll	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Katy Wilmshurst
Headteacher	Miss Melanie Smith
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2012
Telephone number	01582 713452
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