

# Mandeville Primary School

Mandeville Drive, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 2LE

**Inspection dates** 7–8 June 2016

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Mandeville is a good and improving school with many outstanding features. The headteacher’s very clear vision and strong leadership have created a culture where teaching, learning and behaviour flourishes.
- The school’s leaders are a strong team. They work very effectively together to ensure that the school’s aims are met.
- The continual focus on staff development is improving the quality of teaching, so that it is securely good and some is excellent.
- The multi-academy trust supports the school very well both practically, in terms of managing elements such as the budget, and strategically, such as providing continuing professional development for newly qualified teachers.
- The governing body is highly effective. It understands its strategic role very well and holds the school’s leaders to account extremely well.
- From very low starting points, pupils achieve well and make good progress, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs or disability and the most able pupils.
- Mandeville is a very happy school that pupils enjoy coming to. Pupils behave extremely well because expectations are high and rules are clear.
- Pupils are kept safe at school and are taught very well how to keep themselves safe. Pupils feel free from bullying and have absolute faith in staff to help them should concerns ever arise.
- The school’s curriculum is well developed and highly effective. For example, the teaching of Latin in key stage 2 has had a direct impact on improving pupils’ spelling and grammar.
- Parents express a very high degree of satisfaction with the school and almost all would recommend it to other parents.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The school’s assessment system is not fully developed. The school does not currently have a way of tracking the progress over time of individuals and groups.
- A small amount of weaker teaching remains and, where this is the case, there is some low-level disruption.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Develop the school's assessment system so that the progress of individuals and groups can be accurately tracked and monitored over time.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is all of the same high standard and low-level disruption is eradicated.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher is a highly effective leader who has had a clear impact on improving the school. Mandeville is a good and improving school with several outstanding elements. Parents are highly supportive, and appreciative, of the headteacher. One commented that the school has 'an excellent headteacher who is very approachable and has the children's best interests at heart at all times'. This sentiment was repeated throughout the inspection and the headteacher's personal contribution to the success of the school is very clear.
- The headteacher is supported by a strong leadership team. Leadership roles are well defined and there is a clear sense of working towards a common purpose. The strategic approach is illustrated well by senior leaders' annual 'away day', during which they focus on analysing the strengths and weaknesses of the year finishing before planning ahead for the year to come.
- Leaders have a clear vision for the school. They have created a culture where pupils know that they are expected to work hard, behave well and be kind to other people. As a result, the school is a calm, happy and welcoming place where pupils achieve well.
- Leaders of subjects and leaders with other areas of responsibility (such as for provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability) are increasingly effective. Leaders have a good understanding of what it is to be an effective leader and focus well on the school's key priorities.
- Leaders have a very clear and persistent focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school. Expectations are very high and it is clear that there is an appropriate balance of challenge and support to enable staff to reach the standards expected. For example, one teacher's target to 'ensure all children are engaged; don't allow silent laziness' demonstrates the expectation that all pupils should participate fully in lessons. The school has a strong focus on continuing professional development. Each teacher's developmental needs are identified in detail and appropriate support is put in place to help them to address them.
- The school is highly inclusive and welcomes pupils and families from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and speaking a wide range of languages. Pupils are taught to value other people and to be tolerant of differences. It is clear that, as the headteacher commented, 'Promoting tolerance is something that runs through everything we do.' Everyone is valued equally at Mandeville and the school uses the opportunities provided by its diverse population well to prepare pupils for life in modern British society.
- The school's curriculum is well developed, interesting and appropriate. Leaders ensure that the curriculum responds to the needs of pupils and provides them with the right opportunities. For example, personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) is a core part of the school's curriculum. In response to concerns that pupils were not behaving as well out of school as they do in it, leaders introduced 'conscience' as a specific component of the PSHE programme. Pupils now have a far better understanding of how their own choices affect their behaviour, and speak about listening to the 'angel on your shoulder' before taking the right action, not the wrong one.
- The curriculum is further enhanced in Year 5 and Year 6 by an extended day. For the last two academic years, pupils in the final two year groups have been provided with an additional hour of teaching time at the end of every day. This time is 'ring-fenced' for art, music and physical education and pupils are taught by specialist teachers during this time, participating in a wide range of activities including fencing and trampolining. The school has found that this approach works very well and that outcomes for pupils are improving as a result of it.
- The curriculum is highly effective because each aspect of its development is considered carefully and monitored thoroughly. For example, the headteacher took a range of factors into account before deciding to adopt Latin as the language taught to pupils in key stage 2. Her rationale for this decision was clear and there has been a clear impact on improving pupils' spelling and grammar.
- The pupil premium is spent effectively. Disadvantaged pupils are identified early and appropriate measures are put in place to enable them to achieve well. Leaders monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils very closely and their approach, 'So what else can we do?', ensures that there is a continual focus on meeting the needs of the individual pupil.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is spent effectively. The school reviewed provision thoroughly, identified areas to improve and put measures in place to address them. For example, the use of specialist coaches has improved the quality of teaching in the subject and has broadened the range of sports that are offered. As a result, there has been an improvement in pupils' skills progression

throughout the school, and pupils now take part in a much wider range of extra-curricular activities.

- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and this was reflected in conversations with inspectors, on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and in a letter to the lead inspector. Parent View shows that 96% of parents would recommend the school to others. One parent summed up the thoughts of many by saying, 'I couldn't be more pleased with the attention and care my children are receiving at Mandeville.'
- **The governance of the school**
  - The very strong strategic vision of the late chair has created a highly effective governing body. Her systematic and rigorous approach has ensured that the governing body understands both the school and its position in it very well. The late chair focused very well on ensuring that the right people were recruited to the role and, as a result, the governing body has a good mix of skills, knowledge and experience.
  - An example of this is the recruitment of a governor of Bangladeshi heritage. His involvement in the governing body has increased Bangladeshi parents' involvement in the school. For example, approximately 35 parents attended a meeting with the governor, the headteacher and a local imam, focusing on key areas such as the importance of regular attendance. There have been no applications, from members of this community, for holidays in term-time since the meeting took place.
  - Governors know the school very well. They are provided with regular and detailed information by the headteacher and ask appropriate questions to challenge the information they are given. One governor described the headteacher as 'completely open and transparent' and this is reflected clearly in the minutes of meetings. The chair of the governing body attends meetings with the school's improvement partner, enabling her to have third-party confirmation of the information governors are provided with by leaders.
  - Governors show good knowledge of a wide range of issues. They have an appropriate level of involvement with performance management arrangements and they ensure that teachers' performance is linked to their pay.
  - The governor with responsibility for monitoring spending of the pupil premium is very knowledgeable and committed. The headteacher commented that 'She is passionate about disadvantaged children' and this is very clear. The support and challenge that she provides both holds the school's leaders to account and helps them to think more strategically about how the grant is spent.
  - The school is well supported by its multi-academy trust, Spiral Partnership Trust (the MAT). The school is given appropriate autonomy but has the knowledge that the MAT is there as 'back up' when the need should arise. For example, the MAT's leaders recently arranged for one of its directors to take on the role of chair of the governing body at short notice. This has helped to maintain the strength and stability of the governing body during a very difficult and distressing time.
  - The MAT provides a good range of continuing professional development opportunities that the school benefits from. A particularly notable example is the MAT's programme of training and support for newly qualified teachers that has run throughout the academic year. This has been highly effective and has helped the newly qualified teachers in the school to make good progress in their first year of teaching.
  - The headteacher is able to focus strongly on developing teaching and learning in the school because the MAT takes responsibility for the managerial side of school leadership (such as managing the budget). This arrangement works very well for the school and it is clear that the support provided by the MAT is helping the school in its journey towards becoming an outstanding school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
  - The school's single central record of recruitment checks meets statutory requirements. Robust systems are in place to ensure that the school only employs people who they are sure are suitable to work with children.
  - The school's safeguarding team is highly effective and a strong safeguarding culture is evident in the school. The headteacher, as the school's designated senior lead, is well trained and knowledgeable. She has ensured that there are suitable alternative arrangements in place should concerns arise when she is not available.
  - The school uses an electronic system for recording concerns about pupils. Detailed records are kept and the designated safeguarding leads respond quickly and appropriately to concerns raised. The headteacher is tenacious in her approach to safeguarding children and it is very clear that the best interests of pupils are paramount at Mandeville.
  - The school's leaders and governors are fully aware of the 'Prevent' duty and how it affects their

school. The headteacher shows a very clear understanding of when and how to take action. Initiatives such as 'Mandeville and the mosque' are having a clear impact on increasing communication with Muslim families and increasing awareness of the possibility of radicalisation.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong and this has a clear impact on learning. Pupils feel safe to make mistakes and know that this is one of the ways that we learn.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they should behave are high. Pupils respond accordingly and good progress is evident in pupils' exercise books. High expectations were clearly evident in a literacy lesson where the teacher did not accept pupils' first ideas, when carrying out shared writing as a class, but persevered to find a better word or phrase.
- Teacher's good subject knowledge enables them to teach effectively. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, the teacher's very strong knowledge of the language's spelling and grammar rules enabled her to challenge pupils to think more deeply about the text that they were focusing on.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons because teachers employ a range of techniques to make their learning interesting. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson, the teacher used drama techniques very well when teaching pupils to use rhetorical questions effectively. Pupils were given a scenario and asked to act a rhetorical question aimed at persuading Snow White not to eat the poisoned apple. One pupil asked, most compellingly, 'Don't you think it's time you swapped to exotic fruit?', summing up the quality of responses provided by pupils.
- Teachers use questioning very effectively both to check that pupils have understood and to deepen their understanding of particular concepts. Staff also focus very well on developing pupils' oral skills and broadening the range of vocabulary that pupils use.
- The school finds that its model of 2.6 teachers in each year group works very well. Having an additional part-time teacher gives the opportunity to provide 'immediate remediation' in both English and mathematics. That is, when a pupil has not understood a particular aspect of what has been taught, this is followed up straightaway, usually by a qualified teacher.
- The school has recently introduced a new approach to teaching mathematics, based on the method used in Singapore. Teachers have been suitably trained and the initiative is being closely monitored. Leaders report that the quality of teaching in mathematics is improving, but it is too soon for the full impact to be seen.
- Senior leaders have an excellent understanding of assessment and how it can be used to ensure that pupils make good progress. Leaders have considered very carefully what is the best approach for the school and what will benefit pupils most. They have established a rigorous system for monitoring the day-to-day progress pupils make on an individual basis.
- Senior leaders play a key role in checking that all pupils make good progress and that expectations are consistent across year groups and in comparison with national expectations. Leaders are aware that they do not currently have a way of tracking the progress of classes, year groups and identified groups as a whole, and this is something that they are working on.
- Although the overall quality of teaching is very clearly good, and some practice is excellent, some teaching is less strong. Where teaching is weaker, some low-level disruption occurs.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils love their school and enjoy their learning. Pupils feel very safe at school because of the strong relationships they have with staff and the effective safeguarding culture. Pupils know that they can talk to members of staff about anything that troubles them and one pupil commented that, 'We have a good bond with our teachers.' Other pupils summed up pupils' feelings by saying, 'They always listen to you' and 'Don't bottle it up.'
- Pupils feel free from bullying. They have a good understanding of what bullying is and is not, and the different forms it can take. Pupils have been taught strategies to deal with bullying, should it occur, and

they know that they should always tell an adult about anything that worries them.

- Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe in a range of ways, for example through fire drills and bikeability courses. The school has a particularly strong focus on e-safety and pupils are knowledgeable about how to protect themselves when using technology. For example, when asked what they would do if someone bullied them using a mobile phone, one pupil said, 'Block them and tell.'
- Parents express great satisfaction with how well the school keeps their children safe and teaches them to stay safe. One parent summarised the views of many by saying, 'I have been very happy with the level of care and attention to detail that the school has shown towards my family.'
- Pupils play well together and enjoy each other's company. The outdoor areas are attractive and well equipped and pupils enjoy using the apparatus on offer. The recently built 'reading hut' provides a very attractive environment for pupils to sit and read quietly during break and other times, and this has helped to raise the profile of reading in the school.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils know the school rules and follow them carefully. Expectations for how pupils should behave are high and this is very clear in the culture of the school. One pupil said that, 'The teachers maintain a level of authority' and then explained that he meant that pupils feel able to relax but that they always know that the teacher is in control.
- Pupils are polite, welcoming and friendly. They are keen to talk to visitors and to talk about their learning and their school. Pupils display good manners, holding doors open, saying 'good morning' and using an appropriate tone of voice to speak to adults.
- Pupils take pride in their school. The school has focused this year on increasing pupils' pride in their own work and this is starting to have an impact on the presentation of their work in their exercise books. Pupils' pride in their work was clearly evident during an assembly in which pupils enjoyed sharing each other's successes and behaved impeccably throughout.
- Pupils show very good attitudes to learning. They are interested in the work that they are given and one pupil summed this up by saying that 'learning is never boring'. The school has worked on developing the resilience of pupils in key stage 2 and their ability to cope with the possibility of making mistakes. Pupils are now much more willing to try challenges, because they know that 'mistakes are something to learn from' and not something to be afraid of.
- Attendance is similar to the national average although lower for some groups. The headteacher and the school's attendance officer work closely together to ensure that systems are followed rigorously. The school's robust approach is paying dividends and there are clear improvements in rates of attendance for identified groups and individuals.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

**are good**

- Many children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities that are well below those typical of their age. Children make good progress during their time in the early years and the proportion that reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is increasing.
- The teaching of phonics (the relationships between letters and sounds) is effective and pupils achieve well. For the last two years, the proportion of Year 1 pupils who achieved the expected level in the phonics screening check has been above the national average. The school expects a similar result this year.
- Pupils make good progress in key stage 1 and the proportion of pupils who reached the expected level in 2015 was broadly in line with the national average. The shows strong improvement on 2014 when results were well below the national average.
- Pupils continue to make good progress during key stage 2 and progress made by last year's Year 6 pupils was well above average. Results in the key stage 2 national tests have risen steadily in recent years and were well above average in 2015. The school's leaders expect similar results in the new national tests that Year 6 pupils have recently undertaken.
- Disadvantaged pupils start slowly but achieve better the longer they remain in the school. This is because their progress is tracked carefully and suitable measures are put in place to address gaps in their learning. In 2015, disadvantaged pupils made very good progress and the proportion who attained the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average.

- The most able pupils make good progress because teachers' expectations are high and pupils are provided with appropriate challenge. The proportion of Year 6 pupils who achieved the higher levels in the national tests was well above average in 2015.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress. The special educational needs coordinator tracks their progress closely and ensures that their individual needs are met. Teaching assistants are employed effectively and provide good support for pupils, enabling them to achieve well.
- The work in pupils' exercise books confirms that pupils across the school are continuing to make good progress in a range of subjects. However, in a few cases, pupils appear to make slower progress with the same target (for example, to use capital letters at the beginning of sentences) being repeated for an extended period of time.
- The school's new assessment system does not allow pupils' attainment and progress to be measured, and therefore tracked, effectively. The school's leaders are fully aware of this and plans are in place to address the issues. Leaders check, regularly and effectively, that pupils are making progress and that appropriate measures are put in place to support their learning where necessary. However, the system does not allow them to measure whether pupils have made enough progress over time nor how the progress of one group of pupils compares with another.

## Early years provision

## is outstanding

- The early years leader is deeply committed to ensuring that all children achieve as well as they can. She has excellent knowledge and understanding of early years practice and is committed to continually improving her own knowledge of how young children learn. The early years leader tracks carefully the progress children make from their individual starting points and ensures that prompt action is taken to meet individual needs.
- Many children join the Nursery class with skills and abilities that are well below those typical of their age. This is particularly true in terms of their language development with many children having limited ability to communicate at all, or at the early stages of learning to speak English. There are still a large number of children in the Nursery class who come to school in nappies and are not yet toilet-trained.
- Staff focus very well on developing children's language skills and, as a result, they are well prepared for the different demands of the national curriculum in Year 1. Staff use every opportunity to extend children's vocabulary and they model the use of correct grammar routinely. The effective use of common gestures to support verbal communication helps children to develop language skills more quickly.
- Although the proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year remains below the national average, children at Mandeville make rapid progress in the early years from their very low starting points. The school's assessment information shows that at the start of the school year only a third of children were at a level where they could be considered to be on track to reach a good level of development by the end of the year. As a result of the outstanding provision, by Easter that figure had doubled.
- Children's needs are met very well, including disadvantaged children. For example, the school identified that some children struggled to learn early mathematical concepts because their understanding of language was not well developed enough. Additional small-group work was put in place for these children, focusing on developing their understanding of key mathematical language. The intervention was particularly successful with 90% of the group now working at the expected level for their age when no children in the group could do so before they attended the group.
- The early years environment is both attractive and enabling. The outdoor area is particularly well developed and carefully thought out. Children are offered a very wide range of opportunities, across the seven areas of learning, both indoors and out.
- Children learn to follow the school rules quickly and settle well. Behaviour is good and children enjoy coming to school. A number of children have additional needs in terms of managing their behaviour and these are met very well by the early years staff. Staff take safety very seriously and children are taught effectively how to keep themselves safe, within the protective environment of the early years setting.
- The early years staff work very closely with parents and relationships are very good. Staff are very accessible to parents and are always available for 'a quick chat' when necessary. Parents are appropriately involved with their children's education and have regular opportunities to come into school and look at their child's learning journal.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139159
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10010940

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	420
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sarah Ainsworth
<b>Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge</b>	Cathy Longhurst
<b>Telephone number</b>	01727 774098
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.mandeville.herts.sch.uk">www.mandeville.herts.sch.uk</a>
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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26–27 June 2012

## Information about this school

- Mandeville Primary School became a converter academy on 1 January 2013. Spiral Academies Trust opened on the same day. In January 2016, the MAT merged with Fleetville Trust and changed its name to Spiral Partnership Trust. The school now works in partnership with three other schools as part of the MAT.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2013 following a period of acting headship at another school in the MAT. She was deputy headteacher at Mandeville prior to her secondment.
- The previous chair of the governing body died very suddenly, shortly before this inspection, while still in post. The current chair joined the school in May 2016 and is also a director of the MAT.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are two classes in each year group from Reception Year to Year 6.
- Children join the Reception class, full time, in the September after their fourth birthday. There is also a Nursery class that pupils attend part time once they have turned three.
- White British pupils form the largest ethnic group. Approximately one fifth of pupils are of Bangladeshi heritage and the remaining pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The majority of pupils speak English as their first or only language. Some 40% of pupils speak English as an additional language, approximately double the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is higher than average. The pupil premium provides additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is higher than the national average but the proportion who have a statement of special educational needs, or an education, health and care plan, is below average.
- The school meets the current floor standards. These are the minimum standards, set by the government for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning over time. Inspectors observed parts of 22 lessons, some jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked closely at the work in pupils' exercise books, listened to them read and talked to them about their work.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's assessment information, records of leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in the school, and a range of other school documents.
- The views of parents were taken into account, including 69 responses to Parent View, conversations with parents on the playground at the beginning of the school day, and one letter.
- The inspector took account of the views of the 26 members of staff who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, governors and the executive headteacher and chief executive officer of the MAT.

## Inspection team

Wendy Varney, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Diane Hawkes	Ofsted Inspector
Paula Masters	Ofsted Inspector
Tania Perry	Ofsted Inspector
Charlotte Wood	Ofsted Inspector

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