

Mandale Mill Primary School

Thorntree Road, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 8AP

Inspection dates

1–2 November 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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the school's effectiveness has declined. A legacy of underachievement is being tackled but this has not yet resulted in good outcomes for pupils.
- By the end of Year 6, standards of attainment are below average. Pupils do not make good progress in key stage 2 from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. Teachers do not use the information from assessing pupils' skills and knowledge to plan learning that is well matched to pupils' varying needs and abilities. For some pupils, work lacks challenge, especially in writing.
- Leaders do not check regularly enough that their actions are having a positive impact on improving teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Achievement in reading is variable across the school. Opportunities for reading across wider curriculum subjects are sometimes overlooked.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is hampered because they are not given enough opportunities to use and apply their reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- The role of middle leaders is still developing. They do not yet make a fully effective contribution to driving forward improvements in teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The behaviour of some pupils, particularly outside lessons, is sometimes not appropriate. Their play can sometimes be rough.
- Attendance is below average. Leaders' actions to improve attendance are not bringing about enough improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Following a period of considerable turbulence, the headteacher, senior leaders and governors have set the school back on the right path. They share a strong commitment and ambition to improve the academic outcomes and personal development of every child.
- Teaching is improving, especially in key stage 1 and in reading. Younger pupils are making good progress in phonics.
- As a result of effective teaching and support, pupils who attend the infant assessment and support class achieve well.
- Leadership and teaching in the early years are good. Children make good progress.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe. The school provides sensitive and effective support for pupils' welfare and for their families.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it is consistently good, especially in key stage 2, by ensuring that:
 - information from assessing pupils' skills and knowledge is used to plan learning that is well matched to pupils' varying needs and abilities
 - pupils are given more opportunities to apply their reading skills when completing work across the various curriculum subjects
 - pupils' written work is consistently challenging and enables them to develop their skills in greater depth, especially the most able pupils
 - pupils are provided with more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills
 - the reading and writing skills of children in the early years are further developed through an improved range of engaging outdoor activities.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills of middle leaders so that they make a fully effective contribution to driving school improvement
 - making sure that leaders check regularly that their actions are having a positive impact on improving teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Improve pupils' behaviour, especially outside of lessons.
- Improve attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average and that all pupils attend school regularly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has steered the school through a considerable period of turbulence. This included planning for, and moving into, a new building, as well as significant staffing changes. She has managed this well. However, this has had a negative impact on the pace of school improvement. Leaders and governors have not effectively sustained the good quality of teaching reported at the previous inspection. Pupils' outcomes by the end of Year 6 have declined. Leaders and governors have not ensured that pupils in key stages 1 and 2 make consistently good progress from their starting points.
- Following the establishment of a new leadership structure, the pace of improvement has now started to accelerate. Some middle leaders are new to their roles, however, and are still developing their skills so that they can make a more effective contribution to driving school improvement. Nevertheless, they have welcomed opportunities for their professional development and acknowledge that the support they receive is helping them to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and pupils' learning more effectively. Similarly, teachers report that they welcome the additional support given under the new leadership structure to help them improve their teaching.
- Senior leaders have strengthened the arrangements to manage and improve the performance of staff. These reflect closely the priorities for improvement identified in the school's development plan. However, leaders are yet to ensure that teaching is consistently good. Leaders do not check often enough that their actions are having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders are using additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities wisely to support improvements in pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills. The leader for SEN and/or disabilities, for example, makes good use of the school's information about the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to ensure that support and interventions are well targeted, especially in reading. A range of programmes in which pupils learn separately in small groups has been established and this is helping these groups of pupils to achieve increasingly well. However, the variance in the quality of teaching in lessons still sometimes slows their progress.
- Leaders use the physical education (PE) and sport funding effectively. The funding has ensured that pupils take part in a wider range of sporting activities, such as netball and tag rugby. Staff work alongside specialist coaches to improve their skills in teaching PE so that these developments are sustainable in the future.
- The curriculum, together with trips, visitors into school and after-school clubs, enriches pupils' learning effectively, offering a broad and engaging programme. Pupils talk positively about the mindfulness club and the eco-group. Pupils develop their personal skills across a range of subjects. For example, in English, pupils debated and discussed their ideas about an adventure story before producing a piece of art representing this. British values, such as respect for others, are reinforced positively through topic work, as well as the work of the pupil steering group. Pupils were keen to share with inspectors how important it is to listen to each other and treat everyone equally. One pupil said, 'Our

steering group has everyone from all different backgrounds on it and we make decisions together.'

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils learn how to become responsible citizens through their personal, social and health education lessons and through reflective school assemblies. As one pupil said, 'It helps us understand each other better when we can share our experiences.' Even so, leaders are yet to ensure that pupils consistently behave well, especially outside of lessons.
- The majority of parents report that they are pleased with the quality of education on offer. They are especially pleased with the new building. They acknowledge that the school has a positive atmosphere and is very welcoming and helpful.
- The work of the local authority has helped the school to stem the school's recent decline and to accelerate the pace of improvement. Visits to school, such as to support the development of the teaching of reading, and external reviews, including of use of the pupil premium funding, provide effective support to school leaders and governors.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, particularly the need to improve the quality of the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics.
- Following a review by the local authority, governors have produced an action plan that is well focused on developing governors' skills, knowledge and understanding of school improvement. Minutes from more recent governors' meetings and from link governor visits illustrate that they are beginning to ask more searching and challenging questions, especially about pupils' progress.
- The governing body is well organised. Members have a wide range of skills and expertise which add to the leadership capacity in the school. Governors scrutinise the wide range of information they receive and use the effective guidance from the local authority well to further develop their effectiveness to hold leaders to account for the impact of their work.
- Governors monitor the personal development and welfare of pupils carefully and are deeply committed to ensuring that all pupils are well supported and safe. This is a strength of the governing body's work. However, governors are not as clear about the quality of teaching in the school.
- Governors have recently improved the systems to manage teachers' performance, including that of the headteacher. Their policy is clear and understood by all staff in the school. It is helping to support improvement in the quality of teaching.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and followed meticulously. Statutory checks are carried out on the suitability of staff to work with children.
- Leaders have established a positive culture that promotes the importance of the safety and well-being of all pupils. Leaders keep precise records to ensure effective and timely work with external agencies. Staff and governors have received relevant safeguarding

training and updates, including on radicalisation and extremism.

- Pupils confidently explain ways in which the school helps them to learn to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils told inspectors that they learn about internet safety and how to block people on the internet. Pupils feel safe and parents are confident that their children are safe and well cared for in school. One parent expressed the view of many that the teachers are 'always there to help and care for each child to bring the best out in them'.
- Case studies and records show that vulnerable children and their families are supported well. Governors and school leaders recognise the need to support the welfare of all pupils, hence the high levels of investment in provision, including a parent support adviser and team. Leaders are quick to follow up on any concerns and to check this against information on pupils' progress and attendance in order to put in place appropriate interventions. The inclusion team develops effective relationships with families to build sustainable improvements in pupils' safety and care.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning across key stages 1 and 2 over time has not been good. Weak teaching in the past has resulted in a decline in pupils' outcomes by the end of Year 6. While teaching has now been strengthened, it is not yet consistently good, especially in key stage 2.
- Teachers do not use information from assessing pupils' skills and knowledge well enough to plan work that meets pupils' varying needs and abilities. For some pupils, such as the most able, work lacks challenge. Pupils in need of more support sometimes do not receive the help they need to keep up with others.
- There is also variability in how teachers interpret the information about pupils' progress evident in pupils' books and during activities in the classroom. This means that some pupils are unclear what they are expected to learn, how they can apply their learning and how they know they have improved.
- The teaching of reading has been strengthened and is starting to make a difference. Due to good teaching and the effective support from teaching assistants, younger pupils are now achieving well in phonics. Teaching across the school is more consistent and is enabling pupils to use and apply their knowledge of letters and sounds when reading. Good teaching practice is shared effectively among staff. However, teaching does not yet ensure that pupils, especially those in key stage 2, use their reading skills in their work across the various curriculum subjects.
- The teaching of writing is also improving. Pupils are now given more opportunities to use and apply their writing skills, for example in their topic work. Pupils now write at length more often. Pupils are encouraged to check that spelling, punctuation and grammar are used with accuracy. However, too often, pupils' written work lacks evidence of deeper understanding. Opportunities to challenge pupils to achieve greater depth are overlooked, especially to challenge the most able pupils.
- The teaching of pupils who attend the infant assessment and support class is effective. It enables pupils to join in their age-appropriate classes for some lessons, for example PE and art. Pupils are given clear targets, both for their learning and their behaviour. As a result, these pupils enjoy their lessons and make good progress. In English for example,

pupils matched pictures to words and worked out the correct spellings. They were enthusiastic, helped each other and were able to put their words into context.

- Teaching in the early years is good. Relationships between staff and children are very positive. Work is consistently well planned to reflect children's varying needs and abilities. Provision indoors is particularly effective. Opportunities to develop children's skills when learning outside are not as well developed, however.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The new behaviour policy is applied consistently by all staff and understood by all pupils. One pupil, representing the views of many, said to inspectors, 'It's really clear and fair.'
- Pupils reported that staff look after them well and that they feel safe at school. They make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to learn and reflect on these aspects of their development through the curriculum and in additional activities, such as trips and visitors to school. Pupils demonstrate secure knowledge and experience of other ways of life beyond their community and are well prepared for their future lives in modern Britain.
- The school is rightly proud of its achievement of the Unicef 'Rights Respecting' award and the school steering group is active in further developing activities and fundraising events in school and across the community. Pupils' social development is a particular strength and pupils relate well to one another, staff and visitors. The ethos of the school helps pupils understand and consider the needs of others. Pupils are polite and helpful and understand how to act safely themselves and show respect for the safety and feelings of others.
- The school actively deals with contemporary issues and current affairs through its curriculum and values. Special events, such as anti-bullying and diversity projects, help pupils develop an understanding of sensitive issues. The school motto 'all children can sparkle in many different ways' reinforces that everyone is special and unique. One pupil said, 'It's all right to be different in our school.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Attendance is consistently below the national average. Although the school has robust systems in place to tackle poor attendance, it is still too soon to see a positive effect on improving overall attendance. Despite the focused work with families who struggle to get their child to school, persistent absence is still almost twice the national average.
- Teachers and teaching assistants expect pupils to behave well, to respect each other and to get on with their work. In lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning are improving. However, occasionally, when adults do not expect enough of pupils, they lapse into chatting which is not related to their work.
- Most pupils' behaviour at playtime and lunchtime is positive. For example, inspectors saw pupils moving calmly round the school and behaving well in assemblies and at the 'Halloween disco', where pupils were enjoying the music and food and being very sensible

together. However, in unsupervised time, some pupils were boisterous. A few pupils commented that, at playtime, a very small number of children could be quite silly and rough.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils have declined since the previous inspection, especially at key stage 2. Standards of attainment by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics have fallen to below average. Over time, pupils have not made good enough progress from their starting points. Outcomes have been affected by a legacy of weaker teaching in the past. Learning has been too slow and this has led to gaps in pupils' learning. Pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 have a lot to do to catch up.
- Leaders have introduced a clear and focused programme of support to help pupils to do better in reading, writing and mathematics and this is paying off, especially in key stage 1 and in lower key stage 2. Inspection evidence, including from reviewing work in pupils' books and the school's data from assessing pupils, confirms that, currently in school, pupils are now making better progress than in the past. More pupils are now working at the standards expected for their age as a result. However, improvements are recent and are yet to result in good progress, especially of older pupils in key stage 2, from their previous starting points.
- In reading, pupils' achievement has been inconsistent. In 2016, the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check dipped to below average. Leaders addressed this swiftly by making improvements to the way that letters and their sounds are taught. Phonics is now taught well. In 2017, most pupils reached the expected standard at the end of Year 1 and almost all did so by the end of Year 2. Progress in reading is getting better, especially in key stage 1 and in lower key stage 2. Provisional outcomes for pupils in Year 6 in 2017, however, showed that pupils did not make enough progress in reading from their starting points. While current progress in reading is better, pupils still do not accurately and consistently apply their reading skills when they undertake activities across the various curriculum subjects. This continues to hamper their progress.
- Pupils are starting to make better progress in writing. A new approach to teaching writing is helping pupils to consolidate their writing skills and to apply them in different contexts. Pupils are now given more opportunities to write at length and to use and apply their writing skills, such as when completing work in subjects beyond English. Pupils' written work shows a good level of accuracy in spelling and grammar. However, progress in writing is still held back because work often lacks the challenge needed to reach a greater depth of understanding. This is particularly the case for most-able pupils. Opportunities are also sometimes missed for pupils to develop their creative writing.
- In mathematics, pupils are making progress at the nationally expected rate. Good progress is sometimes hampered because pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in order to deepen their understanding. Some pupils struggle with reasoning and problem-solving.
- Over time, different groups of pupils have not made good progress from their starting points. For some, especially disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1, progress is now speeding up. By the end of Year 2, differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils

and others in the school are diminishing.

- Teachers do not always plan work which is well matched to the needs and abilities of different groups of pupils. For the most able pupils, for example, work sometimes lacks challenge. Additional programmes of support and specific targeted interventions help pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language to make effective progress, but this is not supported effectively with consistently good teaching in class.
- Pupils in the infant assessment and support class make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from low starting points. Interventions through small-group work are timely and effective.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the early years is good. Children, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, join the setting with starting points lower than those typical for their age. Teachers use accurate assessments to tailor learning opportunities to children's individual needs. As a result, most children make good progress and are ready to join Year 1 with the skills necessary to succeed.
- Provisional summer 2017 outcomes show that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was just below the national average. This represents good progress from children's starting points. Current children are achieving equally well and most children, including the most able, are making good progress. For example, children were counting forwards and backwards to 10 or 20 and were challenged to work out one more or one less.
- Staff use regular, good-quality observations of children's learning to plan appropriate activities. Provision is well organised and there are good resources which motivate and engage children in their learning. Leaders encourage parents to visit and engage with their children's play and learning. Parents say that they value the opportunities to talk to teachers. Good relationships between home and school foster effective relationships that support children's learning.
- Children demonstrate good standards of behaviour. They follow clear routines and respond well to teachers' high expectations. The early years area is calm and children are productive because staff instil good learning habits in them. For example, during the 'tidying-up music', one child told the inspector that she 'couldn't talk as she was tidying up now'.
- The indoor environment is busy and well resourced. Leaders ensure that there are many well-planned activities to improve children's language skills. However, outdoor provision is not as well developed. Children are not given enough opportunities to develop their skills when learning outside. In the outdoor area, there are limited resources for children to practise writing and reading or to discuss their thinking while playing.
- Relationships between staff and children are very positive. Staff are kind and caring and promote children's self-esteem and personal development well. Children settle quickly and soon get to know the routines of the early years. Adults address minor disputes sensitively, teaching children the rules and encouraging good relationships with their friends. Children behave well.

- Parents are positive about the early years provision. They are happy with how well their children settle into school life and say that staff are friendly and welcoming. They praise the quality of communication with staff and the kind and nurturing learning environment.

School details

Unique reference number	130378
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10037725

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	348
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Millie Scaife
Headteacher	Leanne Moore
Telephone number	01642 647 010
Website	www.mandalemill.stockton.sch.uk
Email address	mandalemill.school@stockton.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Mandale Mill is a larger-than-average local-authority-maintained primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is double the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is just above the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The school's infant assessment and support class caters for pupils from across the local area who have additional cognition and learning needs. This is its final year. Currently, there are 10 pupils who attend this assessment class, which is led by the SEN coordinator.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Children start the early years with part-time education in Nursery. In Reception, children receive full-time education.

Information about this inspection

- The school has moved into a new building since the last inspection and there have been a significant number of staffing changes since then.
- Inspectors gathered a wide range of evidence during the inspection, including through observations of teaching, some of which were undertaken jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors also scrutinised pupils' work across all key stages with subject leaders for mathematics and English. They also heard pupils read. Inspectors visited most classrooms. They observed two assemblies, the school steering group and reading interventions.
- Inspectors met with school staff, including the headteacher, mini-school leaders and subject leaders. Discussions were held with governors, including the chair of the governing body, teachers, pupils and parents. The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation relating to the school's work. This included leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, the school development plan, leaders' records of checks on teaching and learning and information about pupils' progress, attainment, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors examined records concerning safeguarding, the governing body minutes and records of their visits.
- Inspectors analysed the eight responses and written comments submitted to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They considered the 107 responses from the school's own parental questionnaires and the 17 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire. There were no pupil responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jen Cave, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Pearce	Ofsted Inspector
Olie Flitcroft	Ofsted Inspector

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