

Manor School

Lydalls Close, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 7LB

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2018

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The school has undergone a significant period of instability in recent years, and this had a negative impact on pupils' academic as well as their personal and social development.
- Despite current leaders' efforts to improve the quality of teaching, it is too variable across the school. The significant turnover of staff in some classes has had a detrimental impact on pupils' learning and behaviour.
- Pupils do not make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. It is stronger in key stage 1 than in key stage 2.
- Where teaching is weaker, pupils do not behave well. The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- Several leaders are new to their roles and have not yet gained an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. They do not all check that the actions that they have put into place are effective.
- Teachers do not all make enough use of assessment information to plan work for the range of pupils in their class. As a result, some groups of pupils, including the most able and those who have SEN, do not progress as well as they should.
- Children in the early years do not make rapid enough progress. This is because learning tasks provided for them are not challenging enough.
- The curriculum is too narrow and does not provide pupils with enough opportunities to learn subjects other than English and mathematics to any depth.

The school has the following strengths

- The proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in phonics was above average in 2018. This helps pupils to get off to a good start in reading at key stage 1.
- The proportion of girls who reached the expected standard in reading and writing was above average at the end of Year 6 in 2017.
- The headteacher and her leadership team have high expectations. They have taken action to improve the quality of teaching in order to raise pupils' standards. Where teaching is stronger, pupils enjoy learning and make good progress.
- A large majority of parents say that their children enjoy school and are happy and safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including in the early years, by ensuring that:
 - leaders carry out an incisive analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of their area of responsibility so that they can create plans with specific actions to bring about improvement
 - subject leaders sharply evaluate the impact of their actions on pupils' progress to identify what is most effective
 - leaders develop the curriculum so that pupils study a wide range of subjects in depth
 - governors provide a high-quality professional challenge to leaders by asking probing questions to gain a greater understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses
 - leaders improve communications with parents so that they are well informed about the school's work, and ensure that statutory requirements for maintaining the website are met.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including in the early years, by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently use assessment information to plan work that is matched to the learning needs of all pupils, including those who are most able as well as those who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - teachers have secure subject knowledge so that they can deepen pupils' understanding
 - the school's marking and feedback policy is applied more consistently so that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work
 - teachers move pupils on to harder work when they have demonstrated that they can achieve the learning tasks set
 - teachers provide pupils with more opportunities to use their English and mathematical skills when learning in other subjects.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - improving pupils' attendance, especially for boys, disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - ensuring that all pupils are taught about how to maintain a healthy and safe lifestyle, including how they may stay safe from external dangers related to modern technology
 - implementing the school's behaviour and rewards system consistently so that pupils are clearer about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since joining the school in September 2017, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have quickly gained an overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have taken action to bring about improvements. These are still at a very early stage of development and have not yet had time to bring about all the changes needed.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been significant turbulence in staffing at all levels. Several teachers and leaders have left the school and some staff have been on long-term sickness absence. There have been changes to leadership roles, including for English and for SEN.
- There had been a decline in the quality of teaching, pupils' learning and achievement, and in pupils' behaviour, since the previous inspection. The headteacher and her deputy headteacher are ambitious and they have high expectations. Together with the leadership team and governors, they are taking rapid action to reverse this decline.
- School leaders have taken decisive action to bring about improvements to the quality of education. They have introduced a new system to address pupils' behaviour, and this is already bringing about improvements. They have observed the quality of teaching and provided helpful guidance to strengthen teachers' skills. They have acted rapidly to address and manage previously weak teaching. However, they are not complacent and know that more needs to be done to improve outcomes for all pupils.
- Some middle leaders do not carry out an incisive evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects, and so they do not all know precisely what needs to be improved. As a result, some of the actions that they put into place are not always effective. Subject leaders do not always evaluate the impact of the actions that they have put into place to identify what works well, and where further work is needed.
- The headteacher introduced a robust programme to check the quality of teaching. She has introduced a formal system to appraise the work of teachers. She has ensured that all teachers are now accountable for pupils' progress. This has brought about some improvement but there are still inconsistencies across the school. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is stronger in key stage 1 than it is in key stage 2.
- Leaders have reviewed the way in which the pupil premium funding is used. They have identified the barriers that some pupils have to learning and are helping them to overcome these. Teachers are now aware of the needs of their disadvantaged pupils and their progress is showing early signs of improvement. However, the gap between the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally remains too large, and is slow to diminish.
- Although the school provides opportunities for pupils to learn subjects other than English and mathematics, the activities provided are often too simple and do not allow pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding. The way in which the curriculum is planned does not ensure that learning builds from one year to the next, and so does not develop knowledge and skills effectively.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong, and they are largely supportive of each other. They speak enthusiastically about Forest School, where they learn a

variety of social and practical skills that help to prepare them well for life in modern Britain. School assemblies add to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Parents who responded to the online survey and posted comments on free text expressed mixed views about the school. While a number were positive and praised the actions taken by the new leadership team, a significant number expressed concerns about lack of communication. They do not feel well informed about what is going on in school or their child's progress. Many were concerned about the disruption over the past two years. They felt that some leaders were not responsive to their concerns.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed to the school and are ambitious to bring about necessary improvements. They know that the quality of teaching is not yet consistently strong across the school, and they support the leadership in their efforts to improve outcomes for pupils. They visit school regularly and so they see for themselves how the school runs on a day-to-day basis. They say that they are now provided with detailed information from the headteacher, so they have a clearer understanding of the school's performance than they did in the past. This allows them to provide a greater level of challenge to school leaders. However, they do not yet probe or question information at a deeper level, and this limits their ability to make a strategic contribution to school improvement planning.
- Governors review statutory policies regularly and ensure that arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. However, they have not ensured that the school meets responsibilities for maintaining a website containing statutory information.
- New governors have brought valuable skills to the governing body and are well placed to move the school forward. Following discussion and research, they are planning to join a multi-academy trust to provide an effective support network for the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders have ensured that systems for keeping pupils safe are robust. Careful checks are made to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with pupils and that they receive appropriate training when they join the school. All visitors to the school are carefully checked and they are required to comply with the school's safeguarding policy. The designated safeguarding leader has completed the required training and she ensures that all staff know exactly what to do should they have a concern that a child may be at risk from harm. Leaders work in close cooperation with other professionals to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive the right support in a timely way.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know that there are a small number of pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour, but they show understanding towards these pupils. Pupils say that most adults help if a situation gets out of hand, and they are confident that their concerns will be taken seriously. Through the curriculum and assemblies, pupils are taught to stay safe from external dangers, including those relating to modern technology. However, pupils struggled to articulate clearly how to keep themselves safe from harm when using modern devices.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable across the school. While there are pockets of good teaching, too much remains that requires improvement. Teachers do not all use assessment information to plan work that meets the learning needs of the different groups of pupils in their class. There is too little challenge for the most able pupils, because teachers do not have high enough expectations for what these pupils can do. Frequently, pupils of all abilities have very similar work to do.
- Some teachers do not have secure subject knowledge and so they do not explain clearly enough to pupils what they are to learn. They are unable to probe pupils' understanding and develop their learning to greater depth. Pupils themselves say that work is often too easy and that they do not have enough work to do.
- In some classes, teachers use questions effectively to explore how well pupils understand and so they adjust the lesson accordingly. However, this is not uniform across the school and there are too many times when teachers' questions are limited in scope and do not give pupils the opportunities to show how much they know.
- Work in pupils' books is not always presented to a good enough standard. The work provided for them is often repetitive, and this slows pupils' progress. Although teachers have an overview of how well pupils are doing, they do not all follow the school's policy to provide clear guidance about how they may improve their work.
- The teaching of reading has been more successful than in writing. The leadership team introduced a new programme to teach phonics, and this is leading to pupils in key stage 1 developing a greater confidence in reading.
- In some classes, teachers do not always explain clearly or show pupils what it is they are to learn. They do not all consider the specific knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils need to acquire.
- Where teaching is more successful, lessons are well planned and have clear outcomes in mind. Teachers show enthusiasm and present their lessons in a way that captures pupils' interest and imagination. In these lessons, pupils make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. This is largely because there are inconsistencies in the way in which adults deal with poor behaviour. Pupils speak of the confidence that they have in some adults but say that, should they have a problem, a successful solution depends on who they speak to.
- Although the school has put in place initiatives to improve pupils' attendance, it remains below average. Boys, disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have lower rates of attendance than other pupils.

- Most pupils are friendly, courteous and polite. They get on well together and they enjoy talking to visitors about their school. Lunchtimes are very well organised and the school meets the needs of those pupils who have food allergies very well. They have been thoughtful in making special arrangements that help these pupils to feel included.
- Some older pupils have been appointed to posts of responsibility, such as house captains and prefects. They speak proudly of their roles and they take their responsibilities seriously.
- Pupils do not show a deep understanding of healthy lifestyles or the importance of eating the right food and taking regular exercise in order to stay healthy. Although they attended an assembly about staying safe online, few could articulate the reasons why they need to take care when using modern technology.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Where teaching is weaker, pupils have poor attitudes and do not engage in learning. They show signs of boredom and fidget and chat among themselves.
- Pupils do not all take enough pride in their work, and this is reflected in the quality of presentation seen in their books. It is often untidy and poorly presented.
- Most pupils like the new behaviour system, although some report that rewards are often given for little effort. A significant minority of parents who responded to the online survey, or wrote comments using the free-text service, did not feel that the school manages pupils' behaviour well. They reported that rewards are often given for little effort and that those pupils who behaved well often felt missed out.
- The headteacher has introduced tracking systems to monitor pupils' behaviour. This shows that the number of reported incidents has reduced considerably since September. There are very few reported incidents of bullying. Pupils say that they have a good understanding of bullying but that it rarely occurs. The number of pupils who are temporarily excluded from school has reduced during this academic year.

Outcomes for pupils

Require improvement

- Pupils' learning is inconsistent across the school. It varies widely between classes, year-groups and subjects. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they should, particularly in writing and mathematics. Their learning in other subjects is not strong, because the activities they carry out are often superficial and do not deepen their understanding.
- The work in pupils' books reflects the turbulence in staffing over recent years, particularly for the older pupils. The quality of learning has been inconsistent, so that they have not built up their skills and understanding systematically as they move from one year-group to the next.
- Pupils get off to a good start in writing at key stage 1. They write neatly and fluently and express their ideas and thoughts with confidence. Their spelling is mainly accurate and they use punctuation to write with meaning and expression. However, this good start is not maintained across key stage 2, where their progress in writing slows. Their

work is mostly untidy, showing poor handwriting, spelling and punctuation.

- Although the overall picture in attainment and progress in 2017 looked to be close to the national average, this was largely inflated by the attainment of girls. The proportion of girls who reached the expected standard in reading and writing was above average. However, the proportion of boys who reached the expected standard was below average. The attainment and progress for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities was well below average in each of reading, writing and mathematics.
- Current performance information and work in pupils' books show that girls remain ahead of boys, particularly in writing. This is largely due to the poor behaviour and attitude of some boys in class. Boys take less care with their work and so consequently make unnecessary errors.
- The new leader for SEN has introduced changes to the way in which pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are provided for. She is supporting teachers to identify the specific needs of these pupils. She has liaised with staff to provide more precise interventions to help these pupils to catch up with their classmates. Information recorded shows that they are now making more progress than they did in previous years in all subjects.
- The most able pupils do not reach the higher levels of which they are capable. This is because they are not provided with work that is at a sufficiently high enough level. This is particularly the case in mathematics, where they do not have enough opportunities to apply their numeracy skills to solve complex written problems. While pupils competently carry out calculations, there are too few occasions when they have to explain and give reasons for their answers, and this prevents them from applying their skills at a deeper level.
- Pupils at key stage 1 progress more rapidly than they do at key stage 2. In these classes, teachers provide them with some challenging activities that extend their learning, allowing them to understand in greater depth. In the 2017 assessments, the percentage of pupils reaching a greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly in line with pupils nationally.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics has increased year-on-year and is above the national average. This provides pupils with a good start in reading. Pupils across the school enjoy reading. Pupils in Year 6 say that they like books that are exciting and have a moral to them. In Year 2, pupils read with good understanding and respond confidently to questions by referring to what they have read.

Early years provision

Require improvement

- The early years provision requires improvement because there are too many inconsistencies in the provision and outcomes for children across the three classes.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development has improved year-on-year and was broadly average in 2017. However, few children reached a greater depth, which shows that the most able children do not progress as rapidly as they should. Girls do much better than boys and disadvantaged children do not do as well as other

children.

- In some classes, adults have a secure understanding of the learning needs of young children. They plan activities that support children's learning well, allowing them to make good progress. However, there are times when children spend too long without adult intervention and so valuable learning opportunities are lost.
- Although adults observe children and note what they achieve, this information is not routinely used to plan work that builds systematically on what they know and can do. Consequently, they do not make progress rapidly enough across all areas of learning.
- Some areas of the early years are cluttered and untidy and, consequently, children are unclear about the choice of activities available to them. The outdoor provision is underdeveloped and does not support effective learning.
- Adults have established warm relationships with children. As a result, children are confident and they feel safe in school. They know that adults will help them. Children are well behaved and get on very well together. They share and take turns and work and play very well together.
- The early years leader has gained a secure understanding of the provision and has plans to improve the learning environment and the quality of teaching. She has a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and works alongside other staff to help to develop their skills. This is already leading to some improvement, but the leader knows that more needs to be done to develop the roles of support staff and to ensure that a higher proportion of boys reach a good level of development.

School details

Unique reference number	139755
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10046573

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	479
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kerry Brown
Headteacher	Jessica Robinson
Telephone number	01235 812 762
Website	manor-didcot.oxon.sch.uk
Email address	office.2597@manor-didcot.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 March 2016

Information about this school

- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish. The website is currently under reconstruction.
- The school is much larger than most primary schools. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes in some year groups. There is provision for children in the early years in three Reception classes.
- There has been significant turbulence in staffing at all levels since the previous inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2017. Several staff have left or joined the school in the past two years.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is similar to that found in most primary schools
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is similar to the national average.

- Most pupils are White British and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils working in all classes. Most of these observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team. They spoke to pupils about their learning and they looked at work in their books. Inspectors listened to some pupils read, and talked with them about their reading.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and teachers who are new to the profession. They met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors met with small groups of pupils and spoke to them informally in the playground and at lunchtimes. They observed pupils' behaviour in class and as they moved around the school.
- Among the documents scrutinised were school development plans, information relating to pupils' behaviour and safety and the school's own observations of teaching and learning. Inspectors also reviewed minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors met informally with parents during the inspection and they took into account the 81 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, including many free-text comments. They considered 27 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Joy Considine, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Burrell	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Francis	Ofsted Inspector

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