

Manifold Church of England Primary School

Off Leek Road, Warslow, Buxton SK17 0JP

Inspection dates

19–20 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal's energy and unerring judgement have driven the school's remarkably rapid improvement. She has set consistently high expectations for staff and pupils alike. Relationships within the school are excellent.
- Parents and carers give the school their overwhelming support. They appreciate that the staff provide academic and social support that recognises pupils as individuals.
- Children in the early years receive a very strong grounding for their future learning. A stimulating environment and the expert questioning of the staff give them every encouragement to deepen their understanding
- Teachers plan effectively to build upon what pupils already know and understand. They are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach.
- The most able pupils sometimes complete too much routine work before starting tasks that represent a real challenge.
- Improvement plans are based on a sharp analysis of the school's comparative weaknesses. However, they do not include sufficiently precise measures against which governors can check on progress.
- Pupils behave consistently well. They treat each other and adults with respect. Pupils have good opportunities to take responsibility and help others.
- Safeguarding is effective.
- The school offers a broad curriculum which engages pupils' interest. There are good extra-curricular opportunities.
- Pupils' attainment has risen to be broadly in line with the national average. Current pupils are making strong progress in English and mathematics. They are producing work of a good standard in several other subjects.
- Teachers question pupils effectively to check on the progress that they are making in lessons. However, in key stages 1 and 2, questions rarely require pupils to think hard enough and sharpen their ideas.
- Members of the local governing board draw effectively on their expertise to support and challenge the principal. After a period of turbulence, the academy trust has begun to offer the school important benefits.
- Although staff are willing to play a full part in leading the school, leadership is currently too dependent upon the principal.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - teachers set work for the most able pupils that consistently represents a stiff level of challenge
 - teachers' questioning encourages pupils more frequently to think deeply about their work.
- Deepen the impact of leadership and management on pupils' achievement by:
 - developing the leadership skills of staff, particularly with a view to the planning and evaluation of learning in non-core subjects
 - making sure that the school's improvement plans provide all stakeholders, and in particular governors, with the means to make sharp and timely judgements on the impact of the school's actions.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal's remarkable energy, determination and intuitive sense of what pupils have the right to expect have led to exceptionally rapid improvement. She has chosen the correct priorities, set high standards for pupils' conduct and the quality of teaching, and retained an admirable focus on raising levels of achievement. There is no complacency, but rather a commitment to improve the school further.
- At the same time, the principal and her staff have taken great care to ensure that they understand each pupil as an individual. They use this knowledge not only to look after them, but also to encourage their learning. For example, pupils and parents explained how staff had helped pupils to read by finding books that appealed to their particular interests.
- The principal's approach has secured the wholehearted support of parents. They appreciate the academic progress their children are making, and how easy the school makes communication. Above all, parents admire the sense that the staff 'go the extra mile' to help their children.
- The principal has established a clear system for assessing and recording pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers also keep a simpler record of attainment in science, history, geography and physical education (PE). They check their judgements about pupils' attainment against those made by teachers in other schools. Teachers make good use of their assessments to identify those pupils who are at risk of falling behind. The school then provides additional support to help them to catch up.
- The school's curriculum is broadly based, and well designed to engage pupils' interest. Topics are thoughtfully designed to ensure that pupils gain the knowledge and understanding which are important in the learning of different subjects. The school has recently increased the frequency with which pupils go on educational visits. Plans are in place to further improve the teaching of music and modern foreign languages.
- Leaders are well aware of the importance of broadening pupils' horizons. Attractive displays and work completed in religious education (RE) lessons demonstrated that pupils learn in some depth about a number of non-Christian religions, and Islam in particular. During the inspection, staff were making good use of the football World Cup to increase pupils' geographical and social awareness.
- Staff identify pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities effectively, and plan well to address their additional needs. They check on these pupils' progress and adjust their support if required. The school makes good use of expertise from outside the school when appropriate.
- The school spends the PE and sport premium effectively to enhance the skills of the staff and to increase the pupils' participation in sporting activities outside school. Pupils have achieved success in a number of sporting competitions, and the school promotes health and fitness well.
- Leaders at all levels are astute judges of how effectively their actions are improving pupils' learning. During the inspection, the principal's views on the quality of teaching

accorded well with those of the inspector. Plans are well designed to address the school's shortcomings, but do not typically include sufficiently precise indications of what leaders hope to achieve. It is sometimes difficult for governors and others to know just how well the school is faring.

- There is a strong sense of teamwork in the school, and staff are ready to take on leadership roles. However, a high turnover of staff has made it particularly difficult to train individuals and establish them as leaders, for example of curriculum subjects. In the meantime, as governors recognise, the principal bears a particularly heavy load.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Governors fully share the principal's ambition for the school. Members of the local governing board visit the school frequently and discuss with pupils their experiences of school. The board receives detailed reports from the principal on pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance. They draw effectively on their own expertise to support the principal, but also to hold her and the staff to account for the school's outcomes.
- Governors play their full part in keeping pupils safe. They check that the principal fulfils her obligations when appointing staff, and that their own training and that of the staff is up to date. Governors know the local community well, and the risks that it poses. They make sure that the site is safe, and that the staff undertake risk assessments for school trips.
- In very difficult circumstances, governors have monitored the school's expenditure closely, including the additional funds that the school receives to promote the progress of particular groups of pupils. They involve an independent adviser in the management of the principal's performance so that their decisions on her role are fairly judged.
- Until recently, internal difficulties in the academy trust to which the school belongs meant that its assistance to the school was largely limited to the provision of financial services. Since January, however, officers of the trust have begun to offer a level of professional and practical support, and to work effectively with the local governing board.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's procedures meet all statutory requirements. Leaders have made sure that all staff are familiar with child protection guidance and have been trained to an appropriate level. Records are well organised and kept securely.
- Staff are vigilant, and aware of how to identify and report any concerns about a pupil's welfare. The small size of the school and the strength of relationships help staff to recognise when pupils are unhappy or showing signs of stress. Leaders work effectively with parents and other agencies to support those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.
- Leaders and governors have made sure that they have identified and addressed the risks associated with the extended building works currently taking place at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Observations of learning, scrutinies of pupils' workbooks and the school's achievement information show that teaching is now typically good. Teachers use their assessments of pupils' attainment to plan activities which build securely on what they already know and understand. Teaching is particularly effective in the early years.
- Relationships between pupils and adults in the classroom are strong. Teachers maintain clear expectations of pupils' behaviour and standards of presentation.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and explain new ideas clearly. They use the correct subject-specific terms from the youngest age upwards and expect pupils to do the same.
- In mathematics lessons, pupils learn how to perform routine calculations and operations, and how to apply their learning to practical situations. More recently, teachers have encouraged pupils to reason mathematically and explain their ideas, both orally and on paper. Work in other subjects provides pupils with fair opportunities to develop their mathematical skills.
- In English, teachers give pupils the opportunity to check their writing for mistakes, encouraging them to become more independent in maintaining an accurate standard of spelling and punctuation. They encourage pupils to consider an increasingly wide range of vocabulary and to write in a number of different forms.
- In the younger years, staff teach phonics in a structured way that progressively builds up pupils' understanding of how to read and how to record sounds accurately. During the inspection, pupils concentrated well during their phonics lessons, and staff checked carefully on each pupil's progress. The quality of teaching in the different groups was, however, not entirely consistent.
- Leaders provide clear guidance to staff on how they should adapt the learning of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. As a result, their teaching is increasingly effective. Teaching assistants support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities well, breaking down the learning into smaller steps.
- Homework makes a notable contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy an element of choice, and the opportunity to complete extended practical tasks. Parents often contribute to these tasks, thereby becoming more involved in their children's schooling.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to ascertain how well the class and individual pupils are learning. Alternatively, they use mini-whiteboards or flash cards to check on their progress. Teachers use this information well to alter the lesson if required.
- Teachers sometimes question pupils to encourage them to reconsider their first answer or to add further detail, but it is only in the early years that this is common practice. In key stage 1 and key stage 2, pupils are rarely made to think really hard, and so achieve the full depth of understanding of which they are capable.
- In general, teachers ensure that they set tasks which are well matched to pupils' abilities and levels of maturity. They are aware of the need to provide a stiff challenge for the most able pupils. On occasion, however, teachers ask these pupils to complete too much undemanding work before they start on appropriately difficult tasks.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel entirely safe in school. They told the inspector that they do not experience bullying and have the opportunity to work and play without disturbance. The school's records confirm the absence of any serious behavioural incidents.
- The school pays good attention to pupils' mental and physical health. Parents told the inspector about the way in which leaders managed the recent national tests so as to avoid stress. Pupils spoke appreciatively about the 'worry bag' which gave them the opportunity to let staff know of any concerns.
- The school teaches pupils how to stay safe in a number of ways, including internet safety and the risk of fire. Pupils learn about diversity, so that, for example, they could recall an assembly that showed the importance of what people were like on the inside, rather than the outside. Pupils also have the chance to raise money for charity, including one which promotes education in Tanzania.
- Pupils have a range of good opportunities to take responsibility, such as acting as prefects or playground monitors. They can also stand for election as school councillors. Pupils therefore gain a sound understanding of fundamental British values.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are positive and improving further. Some pupils, however, lack a little confidence and see their work as a duty rather than something they enjoy.
- Leaders take great care to ensure that the very few pupils who attend the school only part time are safe at all times, working very closely with their parents. They check regularly on their academic progress.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils from the early years onwards behave very well at social times. They move around the school sensibly and follow school routines. The presence of playground equipment and the enthusiasm of lunchtime supervisors help to ensure that pupils play very happily together at breaktimes. The inspector saw no instances of aggression or unpleasant behaviour.
- Pupils treat adults and each other with respect and courtesy. In the classroom, pupils are willing to study hard. They take a pride in their work and present it neatly. Pupils persevere with longer tasks, demonstrating good powers of concentration. When teachers ask pupils to cooperate, they do so effectively.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average. Boys and girls attend school with equal regularity. The school has not excluded a pupil for a fixed term or permanently since it opened as an academy.
- Just occasionally, a very few pupils let their attention slip when they find the learning less interesting.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes in the school are good. Current pupils, including those in the early years, are achieving well. Achievement information, supported by inspection evidence, shows that they are making consistent and strong progress in reading, writing, mathematics and a number of other subjects.
- The school makes every effort to encourage pupils to read and to engender a love of reading. For example, pupils take the opportunity to read before school if they arrive early. Pupils told the inspector they read regularly at home. Readers are well able to use the phonics strategies they have learned to read unfamiliar words. Abler readers read with fluency and good intonation, and they are able to explain their reading preferences.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check rose to slightly exceed the national average. Information supplied by the school shows that the proportion on track to meet the standard in 2018 is also broadly average.
- Detailed assessment information collected by the school shows that the progress in English and mathematics of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has been a little below that of other pupils. However, changes to the ways in which leaders manage additional provision and the adoption of particular programmes and apps well suited to individuals' needs have led to a marked upturn in progress.
- The small number of pupils in Year 2 in 2017 precludes any meaningful comment on their attainment at the end of key stage 1. The proportions of current Year 2 pupils on track to attain the expected standard and to attain at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics are at least in line with the 2017 national averages.
- Pupils achieve well in a number of other subjects, including science, geography, history and RE. Topics are well chosen to develop pupils' skills and understanding. For example, key stage 2 pupils made pop-up books about different types of organisms. These reflected a detailed understanding of the properties of living things, and of how animals can be classified.
- Pupils' improving attainment, their enthusiasm for their work and the school's broad curriculum mean that Year 4 pupils are well prepared to move on to middle school. Those who spoke to the inspector confirmed that they believed the school had served them well.

Early years provision

Good

- Some children enter the Nursery class or the Reception class with skills and abilities that are typical for their age, but some are below, particularly in their communication skills. Children make good progress, and those that need to do so generally catch up quickly. In 2017, the proportion of children who attained a good level of development was above the national average.
- Teaching in the early years is highly effective. Staff question children expertly to encourage them to formulate ideas and deepen their understanding. For example,

during the inspection, one child was enabled to think through a comparatively difficult mathematical calculation on his own, using appropriate resources. Adults often guide children seamlessly from one activity to another so that they can follow their interests while learning new things. Just occasionally, staff allow activities to run on too long, so that children do not all use their time as productively as they might do.

- The leadership of the provision is strong. Leaders ensure that all staff know what progress individual children have made, and what their next steps need to be. They plan imaginative activities accordingly. Leaders have an astute understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the setting, and how they want to improve it further. They have, for example, identified that more attention should be paid to the early learning goal in 'understanding the world'.
- The early years environment is attractive and safe. Both indoor and outdoor areas are bright and spacious. Displays and well-chosen equipment promote reading, writing and mathematics effectively. They encourage children to tackle activities that relate to all areas of learning.
- Children behave well. Because activities are carefully planned to match to their interests and abilities, children are engaged and often engrossed in their learning. They treat each other with respect, and they know how to share and play cooperatively. All welfare requirements are met.
- Parents speak very highly of the early years provision, and value the close communication with staff. Plans are in place for parents to contribute information to records of their children's progress, but at the moment they do so only rarely.
- Children in the early years grow in confidence, become more articulate speakers and develop a good grounding in phonics and numeracy. They are therefore very well prepared to begin key stage 1.

School details

Unique reference number	142275
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10047351

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Charlotte Hall
Principal	Judith Ackers
Telephone number	01298 84320
Website	www.manifold.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@manifold.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Manifold Church of England Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Some children in the Nursery class attend full time, but the majority attend part time. The numbers of pupils in each year group are markedly uneven.
- When the school reopened as an academy, it was registered as one that accepts pupils up to the age of 11. However, most pupils leave the school in Year 4 to move to middle school.
- Manifold Church of England Primary converted to academy status in September 2015. At that point, it joined the Praxis Trust, which comprises three primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is well below average. The report does not comment on disadvantaged pupils because to do so would risk identification.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well below average.

- All pupils are White British.
- The headteacher and the chair of governors both joined the school in September 2016. There has been considerable staffing instability.
- Under an established flexi-schooling arrangement, a very few pupils attend school three or four days a week, and spend the other days learning at home.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all year groups. Three observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also observed pupils' conduct at breaktime and lunchtime.
- The inspector held discussions with the principal, other staff, members of the local governing body, and representatives of the academy trust and the Diocese of Lichfield.
- A group of older pupils chosen at random met with the inspector. He also spoke to many other pupils informally. The inspector listened to pupils in Years 3 and 4 read.
- The inspector scrutinised in depth all the work produced by a small number of pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 this academic year. He also looked at other workbooks on his visits to classrooms. The inspector considered a range of information about pupils' current performance.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documents, both electronically and on paper. These included: development plans and evaluations of the school's progress; curriculum plans; records of how leaders check on teaching; minutes of governing body meetings; policies; and records showing how the school supports vulnerable pupils.
- The inspector took into account the 39 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and comments made using the free-text facility. He spoke with several parents bringing their children to school on the second day of the inspection. The inspector also considered the six responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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