



Manor Park Church of England First School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 113791
LEA Dorset
Inspection number 279249
Inspection dates 23 March 2006 to 24 March 2006
Reporting inspector Hazel Callaghan AI

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

Type of school	First	School address	Mellstock Avenue
School category	Voluntary controlled		Dorchester
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		Dorset DT1 2BH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01305 268741
Number on roll	375	Fax number	01305 268407
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Patricia Bowen
Date of previous inspection	20 September 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Jane Mockridge

Age group 4 to 9	Inspection dates 23 March 2006 - 24 March 2006	Inspection number 279249
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Manor Park is a large Church of England First School. Most of its 376 pupils come from families of White British descent, a small number are from minority ethnic groups and a few from the Traveller community. A few pupils join the school in the early stages of learning English as an additional language and a below average proportion are identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities. Children are admitted to school with a range of abilities. On entry pupils' standards are predominantly average with strengths in pupils' personal development and speech and language skills. The headteacher joined the school in January 2005. Since then, the school has been through a period of reorganisation, because reduced pupil numbers were unable to sustain the cost of the number of teachers employed by the school. Pupil numbers are now beginning to rise.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Manor Park First School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils but it is improving very quickly because of the new headteacher's outstanding impact on the school over a short period of time. Pupils' personal development and welfare are good. Pupils' achievement and standards are improving because teachers' expectations have risen and pupils' motivation to learn is good. There are particular strengths in the teaching and curriculum for pupils in the reception classes and in Years 1 and 2 with the result that the achievement of pupils in these classes is good. Pupils' progress, teaching and the curriculum in Years 3 and 4 are satisfactory. Improvements in the older classes have not been as rapid as elsewhere in the school because of the absence of the Year 3- 4 leader. Procedures to assess pupils' work are improving but the judgements on how well pupils are achieving are not always accurate in the older classes. Information gained from these assessments is not used consistently well to match activities closely to pupils' learning needs. Similarly, good strategies to help pupils understand how they can improve are inconsistently applied throughout the school. Leadership and management overall is good and the headteacher's evaluation of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses is accurate. Improvement since the previous inspection is now satisfactory and there is a secure capacity for future improvement. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the good provision evident in the reception and Years 1 and 2 classes is further extended into Years 3 and 4 so all pupils achieve well.
- Ensure that teachers' judgements about pupils' learning are accurate and that the work set for pupils builds on what they know and can do.
- Ensure that pupils are given the guidance they need so they understand how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards and achievement are satisfactory at present, but improving steadily. In the reception classes and in Years 1 and 2 pupils make good progress because teachers have high expectations. Pupils in the reception classes make good progress and reach above average standards when they enter Year 1. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2 and standards are rising rapidly in Year 2. Pupils are well on their way to attaining significantly higher standards than those achieved in the 2005 National Curriculum tests. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory but this is an improvement on the inadequate progress evident in the past, especially in mathematics and writing. Expectations for pupils' progress in the past were not high enough and targets for improvement lacked challenge, especially for the higher attaining pupils. This is all changing under the extremely well focused leadership of the headteacher. Targets for all pupils are challenging but attainable and the school's rigorous monitoring gives evidence that these targets for learning are being met and surpassed, particularly in

Years 1 and 2. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make similar progress to their peers. The most effective progress is evident in reception and in Years 1 and 2 where well-trained teaching assistants support vulnerable pupils, those with English as an additional language, and those with learning difficulties and disabilities very well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is above average. Pupils' interpersonal skills are good. They respond well when working with a partner or in small group. Behaviour is good in lessons and during playtimes. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils respect the importance of assemblies and make some thoughtful contributions. For example, a clear sense of empathy came through from the older pupils' performance to parents about their work on World War II. Pupils take responsibility willingly and show care for one another. Through whole class discussions and the School Council, pupils make positive suggestions on how to improve the school. They are keen to help their school community. Through fund raising for a range of local and national charities, pupils show their commitment to helping those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils know it is important to keep safe, take regular exercise and eat healthily. They enjoy their short fruit breaks and physical breaks, and say they feel refreshed afterwards. They make satisfactory progress in developing the skills they need for the next stage of their education and in their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall but there are particular strengths in reception and in Years 1 and 2. Teachers throughout the school have raised their expectations for pupils' progress and this is having its strongest impact in the reception classes and in Years 1 and 2. In the best lessons, activities are well planned and effectively structured with clear objectives for what pupils are to learn. Pupils are confident to "have a go" and want to do well. All teaching assistants are well trained and effective in supporting pupils of all abilities and backgrounds, enabling them to find success. Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is predominantly satisfactory. Teachers' judgements on how well pupils are achieving are not always accurate and the knowledge they have on their progress is not used sufficiently well to develop activities that effectively moves pupils on in their learning. Pupils throughout the school are being increasingly engaged in evaluating their own work. For example, a discussion between a teaching assistant and a group of reception children, very successfully celebrated their past work and stimulated their eagerness to do even better. Target wheels showing pupils' next stages of learning are also effective in supporting pupils' progress, but these different

strategies are inconsistently applied, especially in the older classes. Older pupils are not always clear about how they can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with some strong features. The school has improved the way the curriculum is planned and there has been a focus on making the curriculum more interesting and stimulating. Different subjects are linked well, the current topic of World War II being a good example. Pupils enjoy learning about this through art, music, dance and drama, as well as history. Children in the reception year benefit from a well-planned and stimulating range of activities. The curriculum is also carefully planned for Years 1 and 2. Activities cater well for pupils of different capabilities and contribute to all making good progress. In Years 3 and 4, planning of the work pupils will cover is not as effective, as it is not sufficiently matched to pupils' needs and more capable pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. The curriculum for pupils in the two mixed age classes is of a similar quality: effective in the younger class and satisfactory in the older class. The provision for information and communication technology has improved through the school, but it is not yet underpinning pupils' learning in other subjects. There is a good range of additional activities that stimulate pupils' good learning and the after school clubs are very well supported by pupils. Many pupils also take the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument, from the wide range of choices available.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are good levels of care, guidance and support for pupils. The school provides good pastoral care and pupils feel safe and secure in an environment they know and trust. Staff and governors make sure children's welfare and safety is at the heart of all they do. Pupils' personal support and guidance are good and much appreciated by parents. Vulnerable pupils are identified early and very effective systems help them cope with their difficulties and settle to work. Good guidance and support is also provided for pupils who have learning difficulties. Child protection procedures are effective. Pupils know who to turn to if they have a problem or concern and are confident that help and support will be there. Recent improvements to the way pupils' work is checked and recorded are being used increasingly to improve the match of work to individual needs. Effective strategies for engaging pupils in evaluating their own work are evident throughout the school but not yet used consistently by all staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and are the result of the excellent role model provided by the headteacher. Her rapid and insightful evaluation of the school and its needs has identified the key areas in need of development for standards to rise.

She has created a clear sense of direction and purpose through her passionate commitment to establishing an enjoyable and creative curriculum that stimulates pupils' good learning. Good leadership is also evident in the work of the senior management team particularly in their involvement in the reception classes and in Years 1 and 2. There have been difficulties in the leadership of the older classes due to long-term sickness, which has slowed development, but there is now a strong sense of the whole school moving forward. Essential systems for monitoring pupils' learning have been quickly put into place. The information is analysed very well by the headteacher and the resulting discussions with staff have led to greater recognition of what pupils need to do in order for them to reach their potential. This has led to challenging targets being set and attained by pupils with the result that standards are rising. The governors are now well informed and involved. They are developing their role satisfactorily and are becoming more aware of the school's strengths and areas of weakness. Partnership with parents is good. They are very supportive of the school and are kept well informed and involved. The school has coped well with the reorganisation of classes made necessary by increasing financial difficulties. These budget concerns are now being addressed and resources for learning are much improved. After a slow start, improvement since the previous inspection is now moving quickly and there is a secure capacity for further improvement.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Children I am writing to say thank you for making us feel welcome in your school and for helping us with our questions. We really enjoyed chatting to you and found everything you said very interesting. I thought you would like to know what we found out about your school. What we liked about the school:

- You are happy at school and enjoy your lessons.
- You get on well with each other and the adults in the school.
- You behave sensibly and are kind to each other.
- We think you try hard to do well in your work.
- You know about keeping healthy and safe.
- You are given lots of opportunities to take responsibility and you do it well.
- You have lots of good ideas about how to make the school better and you help lots of other people with your fundraising.
- The teachers look after you well and help you feel safe and secure.

There are many interesting things for you to do that make your learning fun. What we have asked the school to do:

- We have asked the teachers to ensure that you all have the best teaching and interesting things to do so you get on well.
- We have asked the staff to keep a close eye on how well you are doing in your work so they know which activities plan so you make good progress, and to help you know what to do to make your work better.

Thank you again for being so polite and helping us. Yours sincerely Mrs Callaghan (Lead inspector)

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