

Manston St James Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108049
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	288013
Inspection dates	6–7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	James Kilner HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	402
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Karen Gray
Headteacher	Mrs Lynne Gillions
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2005
School address	Sandbed Lane Cross Gates Leeds West Yorkshire LS15 8JH
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Manston St James Church of England (VA) is a large primary school to the north east of Leeds serving families from mainly owner occupied homes. Pupils' skills when joining the school in Reception class are broadly average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic communities is low as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Numbers eligible to receive a free school meal are lower than the national average. The school has been awarded the ActiveMark and Healthy Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with Section 13 (5) of the Education Act of 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Manston St James Church of England (VA) primary is a good school, all previously identified serious weaknesses in leadership and management have been eradicated so that this area is now a strength of the school. Under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, the school has worked closely with the diocese and local authority to ensure that nothing about the school is short of good and there are significant strengths. The headteacher has been instrumental in galvanising the senior leadership team to work closely with the subject leadership teams. They effectively monitor and evaluate all aspects of school life, reporting directly to governors who provide an exceptional level of informed challenge and support.

From the outset the school sets the seal on providing the best for the pupils in their care. Good provision in Foundation Stage, with an appropriate emphasis on basic skills, ensures pupils get off to a flying start. Good progress is continued throughout school ensuring that many pupils leave in Year 6 with above average standards in English and mathematics.

The democratically elected school council have genuine opportunities to influence decisions in the school: many were involved in the selection of the current headteacher. Manners and behaviour in lessons and around school are good. Pupils understand how Christian values help them when dealing with poverty and globalisation issues affecting people living outside the United Kingdom. The proceeds of their fund-raising and charitable donations by the pupils go directly to named organisations worldwide. Pupils gain some understanding of current issues closer to home through well-planned personal social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), together with a good choice of texts which highlight issues of racism and intolerance. However, direct experiences of the wider British culture in their immediate area are underdeveloped. The vast majority of parents support the school's work and comments such as, 'I feel my children are encouraged to excel, not only academically but also emotionally' are typical of many parents' views. A minority of parents feel that their views are not always sufficiently well sought. The school are aware of this and have plans for further consultation.

Teaching is now good, an improvement since the last inspection. Whilst pockets of bland, satisfactory teaching remain this is certainly not the overall picture as much is consistently good with some that is inspirational and outstanding. This has led to the marked improvement in achievement and standards. Effective lessons are typified by the strength of relationships between pupils and adults, rapid pace and excitement at the prospect of learning. In general pupils are guided as to how to improve their work through closely targeted marking. However, this is not a consistent feature throughout the school so that not all pupils are clear about the next steps in their learning. The leadership team are acutely aware of where weaknesses still remain in teaching and are unstinting in their efforts to ensure all becomes good or better.

Improvements to provision ensure that the curriculum is now good. There is a wealth of exciting opportunities in lessons and after school for pupils to participate in sports, drama and art. Subject leaders and the leadership team have ensured that the school is well placed to implement the revised strategies for literacy and numeracy in September 2007.

Much is done to support children and their families to ensure that they receive outstanding levels of care during their time in school. The work of the learning mentor and outside agencies mean that attendance is good and that any barriers to pupils learning are swiftly actioned.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all marking consistently gives guidance to pupils as to how to improve their work.
- Ensure pupils have a wider range of opportunities to explore the cultural diversity within British society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. From starting in Reception to leaving Year 6, pupils make good progress and achieve well. When children first enter the school in their Reception year their skills are broadly average for their age. Good teaching, especially in basic literacy and numeracy skills, gets them off to a good start so that almost all securely achieve, and some exceed, their expected targets by the end of their Foundation Stage. These early achievements are built on well in Years 1 and 2 and good progress continues throughout Key Stage 2 so that standards are above average when pupils reach the end of Year 6.

National test data for 2006 show standards at the end of Year 2 have fallen, over time, to average levels with fewer than expected achieving the higher Level 3. However, rigorous monitoring of progress towards challenging targets has resulted in improvement. The school's assessment data show virtually all pupils attaining at least the standards expected for their age and significant numbers exceeding them in reading, writing and mathematics. Above average standards have been maintained at Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics and the school is confident that the disappointing performance in science in 2006 has been dealt with effectively.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their moral, social and cultural development, is good. They respond positively to the school's Christian ethos and learn about other cultures and faiths. There is an empathy with children of other heritages who are less fortunate, with pupils encouraged, for example, to donate to the Shoebox Appeal and support the Adivasi Eye Clinic in India. However, an awareness of cultural diversity they might encounter in British society is underdeveloped. Pupils' behaviour around school and in lessons is good they are courteous, helpful and eager to learn. The school successfully builds pupils' confidence, self-esteem and emotional development through an effective PSHCE scheme together with the expertise of a skilled learning mentor. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in the above average attendance, participation in extra-curricular clubs and residential visits. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and know about the benefits of healthy eating and regular physical exercise as a result of work undertaken to achieve the 'Healthy Schools Award'. The active school council have encouraged this by involving each class in a Healthy Schools Challenge. Pupils feel safe and are confident that, if any bullying occurs, it will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Their contribution to school and the wider community is good. Older pupils carry out responsibilities in school, including the buddying system encouraging positive behaviour and games during breaks from lessons. Pupils are further involved in the local community through Church activities and sporting events.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good with some that demonstrates outstanding practice. In the best lessons pupils are encouraged to, 'be in the mood for learning'. Current strengths are in the high expectations of pupils, a good level of pace and exciting learning opportunities which enthral the pupils. Pace can slow when teachers spend too long talking to pupils at the start of lessons or where tasks for pupils become low level, such as mundane colouring activities. Teachers are skilled in their use of information and communication technology (ICT), particularly the interactive whiteboard, to support and enthuse pupils. For example, in an outstanding literacy lesson, live news bulletins were used to demonstrate the use of standard English. Older pupils are encouraged to assess their own work for accuracy and as to whether or not they have met their learning goals. Some of the formal marking of pupils work gives them clear feedback on how well they are performing and what they need to do to improve further. However, this is inconsistent so that not all pupils are aware of how to improve on what they have done. Teachers' very good subject knowledge enhances the learning of the more able pupils, presenting a high level of challenge, for example, through solving more complex problems. Relationships between adults and pupils are good.

Teaching assistants are effective in ensuring good rates of progress for pupils in their groups. They know about how young children learn and promote good personal development as they support unobtrusively in taught sessions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum, including the Foundation Stage, is good. It provides enjoyable learning experiences and helps pupils to achieve well. The main focus recently on literacy and numeracy has helped to improve standards throughout the school. However, leaders are aware of the need to adopt a more flexible approach so that basic skills can be practised and consolidated across a wider range of subjects. This is true also of ICT, used well by teachers to bring lessons to life, but recognised by the school that it is not used as effectively as it could be by all pupils. Provision for PSHCE is well established. Pupils learn about potentially hazardous situations and the importance of secure relationships, enabling them to make informed choices about their personal well-being. There are good opportunities for sports and non-sporting activities. Popular choices for example are dance, drama and cross-country running as well as the annual residential visits to Bamburgh and Ingleborough Hall. Learning is also enriched by a good programme of educational visits and visitors to school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Support and guidance are good and the level of care is outstanding. Staff provide a very supportive and encouraging atmosphere in which pupils feel safe. They are secure in the knowledge that staff are there to listen and help them if problems arise. Good relationships foster both personal and academic development. Support for pupils' emotional development is strong through very good links with outside agencies and the school's own pastoral system. Staff are good at identifying and removing barriers to learning and, as a result, the needs of

vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully met. They are well supported in lessons by very effective teaching assistants who reward successes and boost self-esteem. Academic progress is tracked well from the Foundation Stage onwards. Pupils have individual targets to work towards, although these are at an early stage of usage. However, there is not yet a consistent picture of marking to assist pupils in the next steps of their learning. The school has good procedures to help pupils entering and leaving the school. Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure health and safety, child protection and safer recruitment of staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. Under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher the senior leadership team and subject coordinators work harmoniously, to monitor and evaluate the school's performance. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is good with strong lines of communication established between pre-school providers and parents, ensuring smooth and successful transition. A particular strength in the management structure has been the allocation of responsibility to the senior leadership team for early, middle and upper years of the school. This model further extends to subject management where curriculum responsibility is shared across key stages. The result is that the school now has a thorough understanding of its strengths and the teams are proactive in dealing with identified weaknesses, for example, in teaching and learning. The leadership team conduct focused lesson observations and undertake the scrutiny of work to ensure that standards throughout school remain high on the list of priorities. This is in stark contrast to their inactive role identified in the last inspection. Strategic planning is appropriately focussed on these identified priorities. Pupil progress is monitored well through an effective tracking system. Assessment results form the basis for robust discussions with teachers, subject leaders and the headteacher on rates of individual pupils' progress. All are clear about the role they have to play in raising standards.

Governance of the school is a strength with governors demonstrating outstanding abilities in monitoring and challenging, yet wholeheartedly supporting the work of the school. As a result whilst they hold the headteacher and her staff to good account, they are welcomed and valued for their work by all in the school. Together with the headteacher they have been instrumental in successfully overturning a significant budget deficit through strategically planned economies. The school now provides good value for money and is well placed to build further on this success with a good capacity to improve.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you all for the very warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school this week. We all enjoyed meeting with you, especially those invited to speak to us and those who took time to chat to us as we went around your school.

The last time you were inspected it was found that some things were not working as well as they should be and your teachers, governors and headteacher were asked to put things right. The good news is that everybody has worked so hard that yours is now a good school with many things to be proud of. Here are some of them:

- your headteacher, her leadership team and the governors do a great job in guiding your school to even greater success
- everybody in school cares for you well and there are lots of people to support you and your families if anything is going wrong
- many of your lessons are exciting and interesting and this has led to big improvements in what you achieve
- you show great care for other people in the world who are less fortunate than yourselves and raise money to help them

We have asked your school to work on two things to make things even better:

- make sure that all your teachers tell you exactly how to improve your work when it is marked
- make sure you understand more about the different cultures which are around you in this country.

We know that you will be thinking hard as to how you can help in making your school even better.