

Manland Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117103
Local Authority	HERTFORDSHIRE
Inspection number	290721
Inspection dates	14–15 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Florence Olajide

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Canfield
Headteacher	Miss Melanie Smith
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2002
School address	Sauncey Avenue Harpenden Hertfordshire AL5 4QW
Telephone number	01582713452
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves pupils who come from a mix of social and private housing, and most of whom are of a White British cultural heritage. Those who are from minority ethnic groups mainly represent other White backgrounds. The proportions of pupils who speak a first language other than English, and those who are entitled to free school meals, are well below the national average. Under a sixth of the pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. This is slightly below the national average but within this group, the school serves pupils with some very complex needs. Between 2004 and 2006, the school experienced a significant turnover of staff at all levels, and the majority of staff, including the most senior leaders, have been in the school for less than three years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's own modest estimation is that it is satisfactory. On the contrary, this is a good school where the outstanding leadership of the headteacher has resulted in very rapid improvement within a considerably short space of time. This is well put by a longstanding parent who said, 'the improvements in Manland in recent years have been dramatic.' The deputy headteacher and other leaders are effective. Together with the headteacher, they make a strong team that is firmly focused on improving standards and achievement throughout the school. Parents are effusive in their praise of the school and as another remarked, 'the leadership team provide strong, consistent leadership with a sense of fun and enthusiasm!' The confidence that parents and pupils place in the staff is well deserved.

Standards and provision in the Foundation Stage are good. Pupils have access to good teaching and the curriculum meets their needs. This enables them to make good progress and achieve outstanding standards by the end of Key Stage 1. However, the high levels of temporary staffing and inconsistent teaching two years ago meant that some year groups made uneven progress in Key Stage 2, and until very recently, standards and achievement for these groups were only satisfactory.

The new leadership team have established clear and rigorous systems for checking how well pupils are doing and for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and other aspects of the school's work. They have used the information wisely to identify and tackle any weaknesses. Consequently, the quality of teaching is good and some of it is outstanding. This is having a positive impact especially in Key Stage 2, where standards are rapidly improving. Most of the pupils are now making good progress and the school is confident that it will achieve its challenging targets. The school is still working at ensuring that the more able pupils receive appropriate challenge in their work. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the overall achievement of pupils across the school is now good.

The curriculum is good. It actively supports pupils' personal development and well-being, which are also good. Curriculum development has rightly focused first on improving provision and standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communications technology (ICT). However, the school recognises the need to provide equally rich learning experiences across the entire curriculum.

Pupils receive good care and academic guidance. The latter is a particularly strong feature in the school and pupils of all ages understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Pupils' behaviour is impeccable and they are highly motivated to learn. They make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community through a range of initiatives particularly the gardening club (Quadforce) which has won several accolades within the local community.

The school has made good progress since its last inspection albeit most of it in the last year. It provides good value for money and has good capacity to improve even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further raise standards at the end of Key Stage 2 to match the high standards in Key Stage 1.
- Embed recent improvements to the curriculum to further challenge pupils who are more able.
- Extend the good assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science to other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the Reception year with standards that are slightly above average. The school builds well on this good start, such that pupils achieve standards that are significantly higher than average by the end of Year 2. Current school data shows that most of the pupils, including the few from minority ethnic backgrounds, and those with learning difficulties or disabilities, are making good progress. Standards are now good except in Year 6 where although satisfactory, they are rapidly improving due to very good teaching. The school is aware of the lower attainment of boys in Key Stage 1 and has appropriate strategies in place to motivate them. Pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are good and this bodes well for their future economic well-being. Most of the pupils learn to swim a distance of 25 metres by the end of Year 6. Pupils do well in music and participate in many public performances.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Moral and social development are particularly strong but cultural development is only satisfactory because pupils are not sufficiently aware of the diversity of cultures in modern-day Britain. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school because they feel valued and are doing well. One parent explained that her son 'is always keen to go to school and comes home talking enthusiastically about his day'. Much of this reflects the improvements in teaching which have made learning more attractive, particularly for the boys. Pupils are enthusiastic in lessons and their behaviour is exemplary. They are also very polite and friendly. Pupils adhere to the rules that ensure their own safety. They play well together at break times and are aware of the needs of others.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. They play a very active part in the school community through the school council and house system. In addition, they actively engage with the wider community through their support for local charities, environmental issues and their participation in local events and competitions. Attendance is good but the school is aware of a growing proportion of absences for holidays during term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good. The school's heavy investment in ICT has made a strong impact on the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Throughout the school, pupils derive much benefit and pleasure from using interactive white boards to extend and develop their knowledge and understanding. Lessons are well structured with clear learning objectives. Teaching assistants have an effective partnership with teachers and provide pupils with good support. Pupils learn using a variety of motivating methods such as watching video clips or listening to tape recordings. They also have good opportunities to discuss their learning with each other. Independent activities are usually well matched to the needs and abilities of most of the pupils. However, the most able pupils are not always provided with sufficient challenge in their work. A small proportion of teaching is only satisfactory because when pupils are given the opportunity to choose activities, they are not always provided with sufficient structure and guidance to extend their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is planned well. Subject leaders have recently completed a review of when topics are taught to help pupils make better links with their prior learning. This, together with teachers' increased understanding of the different ways in which boys and girls learn, is driving up pupils' achievement. As one pupil commented, 'Lessons are now more exciting and we're learning much more'.

The school makes good provision for pupils who need extra help and tailors its 'catch up' programmes very closely to the specific needs of each child. The school is beginning to develop its provision for pupils who have particular gifts and talents. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, and citizenship, and the school is working towards gaining the 'Healthy Schools' award.

Visits and visitors, including parents, regularly support pupils' learning. Pupils have access to a wide range of clubs. In addition to arts and sporting activities, many pupils take responsibility for growing flowers, fruit and vegetables in the school garden and successfully participate in local horticultural competitions. There is also an active model-making club, run with the help of students from the neighbouring secondary school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils say they feel happy and secure in school. Parents and carers express a high level of satisfaction with the school's care and support. Staff know individual pupils well. They maintain effective links with parents, carers, and specialist agencies to ensure good support and provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The school has suitable procedures for safeguarding pupils and undertakes regular risk assessments. Pupils feel safe and free from bullying and know who to turn to when they need help or advice. Staff encourage pupils to take responsibility through initiatives such as the school council, the house system and the organisation of resources in assemblies.

The school has comprehensive systems for checking how well pupils are doing in English, mathematics and science and is now well placed to extend these systems to other subjects. Teachers set appropriate targets for pupils and give them clear guidance on how well are doing. Pupils know their targets and find teachers' comments helpful in improving their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good with some outstanding features. A strong team spirit permeates the school with everyone working towards a common purpose. All staff and governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weakness and what needs to be done to improve it. There is a strong determination to raise standards and achievement whilst maintaining a balance of good care. There are effective systems and structures for monitoring the school's performance and evaluating its impact. The strong focus on staff professional development has improved the quality of teaching, leadership and management. The school uses the wide range of data it collects very effectively to identify underachievement and improve

provision. This rigorous attention to detail is beginning to have a significant impact on pupils and many are now making accelerated progress.

Subject leaders are increasingly taking responsibility for leading improvement within their subjects. Governors have effective structures and systems, which successfully enable them to provide the school with good challenge and support. The school makes effective use of its links with other agencies to improve provision for pupils. Many parents made positive comments on how well the school takes account of their opinions and concerns. Financial management is sound and the school has appropriate plans for the large amount of money carried forward from previous years.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	1
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	1
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	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Manland Primary School, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 4QW

Thank you for the time you spent talking to us during our recent visit to your school. As we promised, this letter is to let you know what we thought about your school.

Your school is good and well led. Your headteacher and all the staff work very hard to make it a very nice place to be. They have made the teaching much more interesting especially through the use of computers. You told us that as a result, you really enjoy your lessons and the other activities on offer. You also said you appreciate that teachers explain how well you are doing and give you tips on how to do better. We feel that most of you are doing well in your work and achieve good standards. You work hard, behave extremely well and make an excellent contribution to your school, the town and the other people that you raise money for.

We were impressed with how polite and friendly you were. You all stopped to say hello to us with a smile whenever we ran into you, and the younger ones in Reception are very good at saying 'please' and 'thank you' at milk time. We are sure that the staff will be pleased to know that you and your parents really value how well they look after you in school.

To make your school even better, we have asked your teachers to:

- help those of you in Years 3 to 6 to do as well as those in Years 1 and 2
- ensure that those of you who can do harder work are given it at the right level
- check how well you are doing in other subjects apart from English, mathematics and science.

We hope that you will continue to work hard and that your parents will continue to support the school especially by avoiding taking you on holidays during term time. We wish you all the best in the future and hope that in the future your school will become an excellent one.

Florence Olajide

Lead Inspector on behalf of the team