

The Manor CE VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134992
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	294244
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Lorna Brackstone

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Clover
Headteacher	Beverley Martin
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Ruskin Avenue Melksham SN12 7NG
Telephone number	01225 700150
Fax number	01225 791836

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This new school was created just under two years ago following the closure of two schools. It is undersubscribed because of a falling birth rate. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds but there is a small number of Asian pupils who use English as an additional language (EAL). The school operates on two sites about a quarter of a mile apart. Both sites are in very poor decorative order and suffer from significant amounts of vandalism. Just under half of the pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD). There are four specialist learning centres accommodating thirty pupils with specific or multiple difficulties. Pupils are transported to the school from all over the local authority. Attainment on entry into school is exceptionally low, particularly in personal, social and communication skills.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school that provides its pupils with a high quality education. It is outstanding leadership and management that is the key factor in the way this new school has successfully taken shape. The dynamic headteacher relentlessly strives to provide the pupils with the best possible deal, despite the very poor accommodation. She has achieved this through a whole-team approach where all staff and governors are pulling together in the same direction. As one parent explained, 'We are extremely happy with the all-round education our child receives. The headteacher and her team give him a happy, safe and fun environment in which he has thrived academically and socially'.

Standards are broadly average and all pupils, including those with LDD, together with those who have EAL, achieve well. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching staff know their pupils very well, and exceptional relationships ensure that learning takes place in a mutually supportive environment. By sharing the learning intentions at the start of lessons, pupils have a good understanding of what they are expected to learn. However, the school is aware that to raise achievement further, pupils need to be more consistently involved in evaluating their own learning.

The curriculum is outstanding because themes that motivate the pupils are planned and then enhanced by stimulating trips out of school, such as to museums and theatres. Lessons are made interesting and meaningful and this enables pupils to really understand what they have learnt. The main reason why so many pupils enjoy school is because, as one child explained, 'There are such a lot of fun things to do'.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. The consistent and very well understood social and moral provision ensures that pupils behave well. Pupils make a good contribution to their school community and that of the local area. However, the school is fully aware that pupils do not have a sufficient understanding of life outside the rural area in which they live.

The level of care, guidance and support given to pupils is outstanding. This ensures that they develop good levels of confidence and self-esteem which support them in the next stage of education. The views of most parents can be summed up by one who explained, 'We are extremely pleased with the support, encouragement and understanding that our child receives. The staff work extremely hard and do a brilliant job'.

The quality and provision of the Foundation Stage is good. The children are well taught and enjoy a curriculum that meets their needs well. The quality and provision of the specialist centres are good because pupils are given the specific support they need. The school works well in partnerships with others. For example, family workshops are designed to help the children make improved progress. The close links with outside agencies are used well to support pupils who have LDD.

The excellent systems that are in place to monitor the performance of the school ensure that the shared understanding of its strengths and areas for development are realistic. Given its outstanding leadership and management, the school has an excellent capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that pupils to have a greater understanding of life outside the rural town they live in

- raise achievement by developing consistent ways that enable pupils to evaluate their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children in the Reception class achieve well but many do not attain the levels expected by the start of Year 1 because their personal, social and communication skills are still at a low level. Current standards for those pupils who do not have LDD are broadly average in Year 6 and below average for those in Year 2. This represents a good improvement since 2006 when the first published tests for this new school were very low in relation to national averages. Pupils with LDD, both in the main school and in the specialist centres, reach standards that are below nationally expected levels. However, all pupils in the school achieve well in relation to their very low starting points, including those pupils who use EAL. Pupil progress has been gaining momentum over the past two years and is now moving at a fast rate. This is because the leaders and managers of the school have made effective changes to the curriculum and ensured that teaching is consistently good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The good quality opportunities for learning in the Reception class and in the specialist centres help the children to make good progress in their personal and social development. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the need to keep healthy and fit. They feel safe and well cared for in school because they are given exceptional support. Attendance is satisfactory and improving, because fewer holidays are now taken during term times. Pupils enjoy school and show positive attitudes towards their learning. This is because they are actively involved in lessons and feel confident that their contributions are valued. Although a very small minority of pupils with LDD occasionally show challenging behaviour, most pupils are well behaved and adhere well to the agreed code of conduct. Their involvement in fund-raising events and the Melksham Carnival illustrates their good contribution to their own school community and the local area. Pupils' aspirations are boosted well through involvement in class and whole-school councils. Coupled with the good achievement in their basic skills, this enables them to be adequately equipped for their future economic well-being. However, although they have a sound knowledge of different faiths and ways of life in other parts of the world, they have a limited knowledge of life outside the rural town in which they live.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The outstanding relationships between staff and pupils ensure that teaching and learning are harmonious throughout the school. All pupils are members of the 'Learning Crew' and this promotes a desire to develop their skills. Subject knowledge is secure and teachers have a very good understanding of the needs of the pupils they teach. For instance, in the specialist centres, a very good range of visual resources are used very effectively to support learning. In the Reception class, the children learn well because many of the activities are based around developing communication skills. Despite the dreary surroundings in which the pupils are accommodated, teaching throughout the school is imaginative and pupils are motivated in their learning. For example, Year 5 pupils have taken on the role of detectives to investigate life in

the twentieth century. At the start of each lesson, learning intentions are clearly shared with the pupils and this enables them to know what the lesson is about. However, there is not a whole-school approach to making sure that all pupils evaluate what they have actually learnt at the end of the session. Teaching assistants effectively support pupils who have LDD in both the main school and within the specialist centres.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Interesting topics and creative links between subjects ensure that the curriculum is meaningful to all pupils and relevant to their needs. In the Reception class, the work is suitably based around activities that motivate the children. For example, visits to a vet's surgery and a local farm have supported their work on animals well. Year 5 used the story of 'The Jolly Postman' very effectively to explore life in the 1960s, including such important events as the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the World Cup, and the impact of The Beatles. The curriculum in the specialist centres provides extremely well for the diverse individual needs of all their pupils. An excellent range of visits out of school supports the curriculum and helps to make up for the poor environment that the pupils are accommodated in day in, day out. Outings to the local theatre, trips to London and visitors into school, including a popular children's author, enable pupils to have first-hand experiences in their learning. There are excellent opportunities provided at lunchtime and after school for a range of extra-curricular activities. The outstanding programme for personal, social, health, and emotional development makes a very positive contribution to the development of pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

When the youngest children start school, they are very well cared for and the close links with home ensure that the induction period in the Reception class is smooth. Older pupils feel confident when they make the transition to secondary school because the guidance they are given is excellent. Both teaching and non-teaching staff are extremely vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety despite the poor standards of accommodation and the distance between the two sites. All procedures for safeguarding pupils are fully in place, including those to ensure child protection. Outstanding pastoral provision is consistently applied by all staff, with pupils' care being given top priority at all times. This is particularly valuable in ensuring that any vulnerable pupils are very well looked after. Procedures for catering for pupils with LDD in both the main school and within the specialist centres are exceptional because the teaching and support staff fully understand the needs of each individual.

Academic guidance for pupils' work is good. Pupils use their targets to improve the quality of their work and teachers' mark work consistently. Individual education plans clearly identify what steps pupils with LDD need to make to help them improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The exceptional way the headteacher has led the school through its first two years of existence has ensured that pupil achievement is good. The focus on establishing very strong and consistent pastoral care and guidance throughout the two school sites has resulted in improved personal

development, particularly in attendance and behaviour. The headteacher has empowered her exceptionally strong leadership team to introduce rigorous and systematic tracking and monitoring procedures. This has successfully driven up the rate of pupil progress throughout the school. The specialist centres are also led and managed extremely well. Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They use this knowledge very well to support and challenge senior staff, and this has resulted in ongoing improvements in provision.

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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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	3

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

27 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Manor CE VC Primary School, Melksham, SN12 7NG

Thank you very much for making us so welcome at your school. We would like to say a special thanks to the pupils we met who told us all about life at The Manor.

Your school provides you with a good education. You feel safe because the school looks after you extremely well. You are exceptionally well cared for and all the adults in school give you excellent support and guidance. Although a significant number of you have difficulties in your learning, you all make good progress in both your academic and personal development. You behave well and enjoy your learning. This is because teaching is good and lessons are presented in a way that makes sense to you. The curriculum is very exciting and we were very interested to hear about all the extremely fascinating topics you learn about.

You are proud of all the after-school activities you are involved in and we were very impressed with your detailed knowledge about keeping fit and healthy. We particularly liked hearing all about your trips out of school, and it seems that the residential visits are a firm favourite!

The adults in charge of the school are leading and managing it exceptionally well. Despite the difficulties of the accommodation, your headteacher is extremely determined to always give you the very best education.

We have asked the school to help you to learn more about life outside the rural area you live in. We have asked your teachers to help you work out what you have learnt so that you can then identify what you need to learn next.

Once again, thank you for your help. Keep doing your best and working with the adults to make sure that The Manor gets better and better.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone, Peter Isherwood, Richard Barnard and Jill Arnold The Inspection Team