

Manor Way Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103816
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	308429
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2008
Reporting inspector	John Horwood

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	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathryn Williets
Headteacher	Caroline Phipps
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2005
School address	Brier Mill Road Halesowen B63 3HA
Telephone number	01384 818895
Fax number	01384 818897

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a slightly smaller than average primary school. Only a few pupils are from ethnic minority groups with the majority being of White British origin. Very few have English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is much lower than average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is close to the national average.

A large proportion of the staff have joined the school since the last inspection, including the headteacher who joined in September 2005. A pre-school group, which is not part of the school provision, is based within the school building.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school offers pupils a satisfactory education. During a considerable period of staffing changes and the restructuring of responsibilities, the headteacher has ensured that standards and progress have been maintained at the same level as when she arrived. The restructured leadership team is now working together well and has a clear vision for raising standards. The governing body, membership of which has also changed significantly in the last three years, shares the same vision and provides appropriate support and challenge. In addition to national initiatives, there have been a large number of school driven initiatives introduced during the last two years. It has been difficult for teachers to handle all these and they are not monitored with sufficient rigour to assess their impact on raising standards. This makes it hard for senior managers to be certain about which initiatives are working well. Nevertheless, leaders have established a firm foundation from which to move forward and the school has demonstrated a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills that are generally close to the expected levels for their age. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. There are no significant differences between the progress made over time by any group of pupils although those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities often make good progress when they are being given extra support by teachers or teaching assistants.

The inspection confirmed the school's view that teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are taking positive steps to improve their teaching through additional training, and this is helping to build on existing good practice. In some lessons, teachers already ensure that there is a good pace to learning, and pupils respond particularly well when activities are practical. However, teachers do not make sufficient use of information about how well pupils are doing to ensure that work is fully matched to their differing starting points. When this happens, some pupils become restless because the work is not engaging. Pupils know their targets but the quality of marking is variable and does not always provide sufficient guidance on how to improve. Although teaching is regularly monitored, there is insufficient focus on checking whether pupils are learning quickly enough to help senior managers to identify where additional support is needed. Academic guidance overall is satisfactory. The current curriculum meets requirements but is being revised to suit the children better. Extra-curricular activities are well supported.

Good systems are in place to ensure the safety and care of pupils. There are good links with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils are supported well. Pupils benefit from good links with other schools in Halesowen. For example, teachers work closely with staff from the on-site pre-school to help children settle quickly when they start school. Transition arrangements for pupils when they move to their secondary school are also good. Adults provide good support for pupils' personal development which is good throughout the school. Relationships throughout the school are very good and pupils generally behave well. Pupils develop good personal qualities and feel safe and well cared for. Most pupils are happy at school, and they especially like the good range of clubs, visits and visitors that enrich the otherwise satisfactory curriculum. However, pupils do not enjoy all the lessons, especially where there is a lot of note taking or a lack of challenge.

Pupils willingly take on responsibilities within school and are very proud of their achievements. Their contribution to the community is good with good involvement in community sport events

and with the local hospice. Pupils have a good understanding of what they have to do to lead healthy lifestyles and they make sensible choices about food and activities. Rates of attendance are above average and the school has good ongoing measures in place to improve it even further. Although pupils acquire good personal skills they have sound basic skills in literacy and numeracy and this means they are satisfactorily prepared for their next stage of education.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, although there are some good features. Children make satisfactory progress, reaching broadly average standards by the end of the Reception Year. Children settle well and soon learn to be independent and to follow routines. There is an appropriate balance between adult led and child initiated activities. The structured teaching of phonics is helping to raise standards in early reading and writing skills, as it is lively and interactive. This enhances the children's enjoyment of learning. Progress in listening skills is slower as children do not always respect each other's views and do not always listen to the teacher as well as they should. Nevertheless, the majority of children communicate effectively and confidently, using well structured sentences. The indoor curriculum is good with all six areas of learning covered well. The outdoor area is small and this restricts large-scale physical and creative play and as yet does not support all six areas of learning as well as it should, especially in literacy and numeracy. This slows the rate at which skills can improve. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory, with staff working well as a team.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching consistently challenges all pupils and that the quality of marking provides enough guidance to help pupils understand how to improve.
- Improve the quality of the monitoring of teaching so that it focuses more closely on whether pupils are learning quickly enough.
- Review the prioritisation of initiatives and ensure effective monitoring of their impact on raising standards.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter and leave each stage of the school with broadly average standards in most years, having made satisfactory progress. In 2007, standards at the end of Year 6 were above average but this cohort was of higher ability than the current Year 6 when they entered KS2. Pupils do slightly better in science than in other subjects across the school. Pupils said this was because they enjoy practical subjects. Strategies to raise standards have been introduced but they have not been in place long enough to have had a sustained impact on raising standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins their good personal development. Spiritual development benefits from assemblies and the religious education

lessons which pupils find exciting and enjoyable. Good social and moral skills are evident and exemplified in the very good relationships throughout the school. Behaviour in lessons is good, ensuring that pupils can learn in a safe and happy environment. Rates of exclusion are low and this is only used as a last resort to ensure the safety of others. Racist incidents are rare but are recorded and reported appropriately. Attitudes to learning are positive when lessons are sufficiently exciting but levels of enjoyment are satisfactory overall because pupils rightly find some lessons dull. Pupils respond well to the opportunities for responsibility that the school provides and are clearly proud of their school. The rewards systems to encourage attendance have been very effective. Consequently, attendance has risen to above the national average with several classes achieving outstanding levels.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although there are good features to teaching across the school. In some lessons, there is a brisk pace, secure subject knowledge, and tasks are closely matched to pupils differing abilities, with plenty of challenge for the more able. Where teaching is less effective, there is too much teacher talk, children sit for too long on the carpet and become restless or respond passively and work does not build well enough on pupils' different starting points. The majority of pupils say they enjoy coming to school but a number say they do not, and some find lessons boring because they spend too long sitting down or taking notes. Senior managers have monitored lessons but areas for development sometimes lack focus because insufficient attention has been paid to whether pupils are learning quickly enough. Work is regularly marked but marking is not always of consistently good quality. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed to support those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who make at least satisfactory progress overall. The use of pupils' self-assessment is developing well, helping them to get a clearer picture of how well they are doing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Senior managers are taking good steps to improve the curriculum so that it is more relevant to the pupils' interests and aptitudes. There are already some good features emerging, notably the recent introduction of the Creative Learning Journey, materials about which pupils are enthusiastic because it is more interactive and exciting. This new curriculum initiative provides good opportunities for pupils to use their information and communication technology and literacy skills in different subjects but opportunities to use mathematical skills are less well developed. Many curriculum initiatives are very recent, and staff have not yet had the opportunity to monitor formally the impact of the changes on achievement and standards. Planning for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to be fully included in activities. The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well, helping them to learn about the importance of exercise and healthy lifestyles and to appreciate the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse.

There is a good range of after school and lunchtime clubs that provide pupils with many opportunities to take part in sporting or arts activities. These are very well attended and help to bring subjects alive. Personal Social Citizenship and Health Education lessons include

appropriate ways of learning about exercise, healthy lifestyles and the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good pastoral care ensures that pupils feel safe and secure and are able to develop good personal skills. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and there is a good range of systems in place to ensure the health and safety of pupils. Procedures for child protection are securely in place and staff are trained regularly in what to do if they have a concern. The school has put in place a good range of measures to improve attendance and these have had a positive effect.

The quality of academic guidance is satisfactory overall, but variable in quality. The school has gathered a wealth of data about how well pupils are doing. The data is being used to highlight those needing support but are not sufficiently well used by all teachers to ensure that differing needs are being fully met. The target setting process is helping pupils develop a better understanding of how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has vision and enthusiasm which are helping the school to move forward. As one parent said, 'She has the school at heart and is clearly passionate about the children and the school.' She has formed a good team of staff who work together well, share her vision and are taking the right steps to improve provision. Self-evaluation is satisfactory, but the monitoring of teaching is insufficiently focused on whether pupils are learning quickly enough. Governors are actively involved in school activities and are both supportive of the leadership team and provide challenge about decisions. They fully meet their statutory requirements but they have limited experience and are still developing their skills. In particular, governors and senior leaders do not sufficiently prioritise the strategies for raising standards. There have been many potentially good initiatives but they have not been monitored rigorously to see if they are really helping to raise standards and to find out which are most effective.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	3

The quality of provision

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

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

21 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Manor Way Primary School, Halesowen B63 3HA

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed being at your school, meeting with your teachers and talking to you during the day. We found that your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. These are our main findings.

- The staff take good care of you and ensure you are kept safe.
- During your time at the school you make satisfactory progress, but work is not always challenging enough for all of you.
- Those who find learning difficult have good support in lessons.
- Your behaviour is good and you have good relationships with each other and with adults.
- Your attendance is good and you enjoy practical activities and those lessons that you find exciting and fully involve you.
- The school has introduced many new ideas but they need to see which ones are helping you most.
- The senior leaders in the school monitor the quality of teaching, but not always how this is affecting your learning.

In order to help the school improve and become even better, we have asked staff to do a number of things.

- Help you make more progress by making sure that all the work you do is at the right level for each of you and by using marking to help you understand how to improve.
- When lessons are being monitored to focus more on the learning that is taking place to check that you are all doing well enough.
- Look at all the new systems that are being introduced to check that they are having the desired effect so that senior leaders can concentrate on developing the most effective ones first.

You can do your bit by asking teachers to explain how to get better, and working hard to reach the targets that they set for you.

We wish you all every success and happiness in your future education.

John Horwood Lead inspector

Annex B

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