

Manorfield Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107672
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	309469
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Roger Gill

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	281
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr E Chopdat
Headteacher	Mrs S Palmer
Date of previous school inspection	7 April 2003
School address	Manor Way Staincliffe Batley West Yorkshire WF17 7DQ
Telephone number	01924 326718
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school is situated in an area of challenging social circumstances. It has a very high proportion of children who are learning English as an additional language, many of whom are at an early stage. A very small number are from a White British heritage. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. There have been several key changes in staff since Easter 2007. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had only been in post for four weeks. The school has an acting deputy headteacher and three classes covered by temporary staff. There is a Children's Centre on the school's site.

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 school, which is described widely by parents as warm, caring, welcoming and very well organised. The inspection fully agrees with these sentiments. Children learn well and achievement is good. Their superb behaviour and keen attitudes are fuelled by practical learning that accelerates the acquisition of vocabulary, particularly as a very high proportion is learning English as an additional language.

The school day starts with an opportunity for children to change books that have been shared with parents at home. This session demonstrates the school's success in many different ways. Teaching assistants instil the love of reading by making sure that the high quality books are advertised enthusiastically. As a result, children are intensely keen, parents are proud of their children and the atmosphere is quiet and purposeful. These qualities are mirrored around school generally and represent, in part, the accomplishments of leadership and management. Standards of reading and writing, by the end of Year 2, are broadly average, which demonstrates the strong progress made by children from the moment they start in the Nursery.

Children enjoy school a great deal. The way that they help out with jobs around school and get involved in the work of the school council shows how keen they are. Learning is fun and the good quality curriculum is extended by calming activities such as yoga and peer massage, which have a powerful effect on children's behaviour and attitudes. A few parents are concerned that there are no after-school activities. The school recognises this relative gap in provision and plans to introduce some activities, such as a football club, shortly. Children behave so sensibly around school that they all feel safe. They know about eating healthily, taking exercise and drinking enough water.

Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2, but are below average in mathematics. Children make good progress in some aspects of mathematics, but it is in solving problems using calculation that they find the most difficult. This is partly because processes are described in English and so many pupils find them hard to follow. Nevertheless, mathematical problems are being tackled in lessons more rigorously this year to good effect. It is, however, too early to see the results of this work in raised standards.

Teaching is good in its effect on children's personal development and their academic learning. The majority of children have taken the recent staff changes in their stride. A minority of parents are worried about the effect of these changes on their children's progress. Some slight interruptions in learning are being resolved and the few who lost momentum are regaining their enthusiasm this term. The central strength of teaching is the way that first-hand experiences are used so well to help children learn to express themselves. For example, Year 1 classes were spell bound when they saw real owls in school. One child, when trying to draw one on a computer, was fired up to name the 'big sharp things to pick up its food,' demonstrating a real enthusiasm to recall and become familiar with the correct word, 'talons'.

The headteacher has galvanised the entire staff into maintaining the school's high profile among parents at the same time as pushing ahead with some major developments. Links with the new on-site Children's Centre are developing very well. The school's work, begun in September 2007, in making the learning of letter sounds and problem-solving in mathematics even more relevant and meaningful for children is beginning to have a good effect. This signifies the school's capacity to carry on improving. The care, guidance and support provided for children is good, but the advice they receive about improving their work lacks consistency from class

to class. Some children are very clear about their next steps in learning, but others are a little vague. As yet the children do not have enough opportunities to consider their own successes and think about how they could improve further.

There is still more to be done, which is the main reason why the school thinks leadership and management are satisfactory. The inspection judges leadership and management to be good in their influence over children's learning. Relative weaknesses exist in analysing the effect of teaching on children's learning, in lessons and in the tracking of achievement. The lack of precision in these respects prevents targets for improvement from being stated clearly for all children in the classroom and, more generally, in action plans. This means that governors, who do a good job in all other respects, cannot use the school's plans for school improvement to measure accurately what has been achieved.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and follow this up with an equally productive year in Reception. They become confident learners who socialise well, partly aided by very smooth transitions from Nursery to Reception and then on to Year 1. Skills on entry are well below those expected nationally, particularly in respect of knowledge about the English language. Nevertheless, as a result of the good teaching they receive, the majority of children learn quickly. They achieve well despite not reaching the expected goals by the end of Reception, except in personal development.

Teaching capitalises on children's interests. Those who were captivated by the frost on leaves, for example, soon learnt more when adults developed their thinking about 'hot' and 'cold'. They placed warm water in containers on the ground to create patterns in places where melting had taken place. This careful balance of freely chosen play and adult-led investigations is the hallmark of good work throughout the Foundation Stage. The use of the accommodation and the provision of high quality resources that promote learning are excellent features of teaching. Links with parents are strong and productive. Many commented on how well their children are welcomed and introduced to school life. Teachers do not yet have a way to make detailed evaluations about the progress of classes. This means that teachers cannot learn from the highs and lows of children's performance across the six areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics to reach at least the nationally expected level at the end of Year 2.
- Make better use of information about children's progress in order to set more accurate and measurable targets for individuals and groups to achieve.
- Involve children more in judging their own success and identifying how they can improve further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Broadly average standards in the last few years show that children achieve well apart from in mathematics. Current progress in mathematics is good in most classes because teachers are spending longer on topics that children find difficult. Higher attaining pupils progress well, including in reading, writing and mathematics, because additional challenges are geared to

their needs. Likewise, children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress. Elements of slower progress are, as in 2007, associated with middle attaining children who fail to grasp some mathematical ideas. This is often the case, despite the diligence of bilingual support assistants, because children find it hard to discuss processes like multiplication and division in English. The small group of children with a White British heritage progress as well as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children display excitement and joy in a school in which they are cared for so well. For example, children grew in stature in a Year 2 mathematics lesson when asked to devise their own questions based on their investigations into length. Equally, the wonder shown by younger children when touching owls demonstrated first-rate responses in an otherwise good level of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Behaviour is always good and often outstanding, especially in assemblies and those lessons in which children are riveted. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average, which is a hard won success for the school. Children feel safe and know what it is to be healthy, even if some try to avoid healthy eating options. The industry shown by many children when helping out in school is matched by their ability to work in groups in the classroom. They are learning valuable lessons which stand them in good stead for future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers create a very positive atmosphere in lessons, which brings out the best in children. This, coupled with effective teaching assistants, plenty of useful resources and slick ways to manage behaviour, makes learning good. There are valuable systems to assess the progress of individual children, which are used to plan new work. These are not yet used to evaluate differences between classes or year groups, so teaching is not informed by general issues about progress. Marking is helpful in the way that it boosts children's confidence, but inconsistent in giving advice about necessary improvements. There are a few differences in the quality of teaching from class to class owing to the staffing changes, but these do not stop teaching from being good overall. Parents are delighted with their children's learning and appreciate, in particular, the help given to children at their early stages of learning English.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum contains a wide range of interesting opportunities, which promote the use of spoken English. Good provision is made for children to use their heritage language if necessary. It provides for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well and there are good programmes for health and fitness. Basic skills of literacy and mathematics are well planned, as are other subjects. Visits and visitors play a prominent part in the curriculum. Recently, children dressed up in historical clothing at Oakwell Hall, studied sculpture at the West Yorkshire Sculpture Park and visited churches and mosques to discuss similarities and differences. Discussions about their feelings make a strong contribution to children's personal development.

The lack of after-school activities and the limited use of information and communication technology across the curriculum prevent the curriculum from being better than good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is a warm and caring place in which children feel safe and happy. The way that all children are treated as individuals is a strength which, according to parents, has become a tradition of the school. Underlying this supportive atmosphere are rigorous systems to analyse and minimise risk. Child protection arrangements are in place and working. Teaching and bilingual support assistants make a very valuable contribution to children's learning. This is one reason why children do so well at reading and writing. Moreover, they ensure that children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities learn well. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning and many are. The arrangements for creating a smooth passage for children through the school are excellent. It is the improvement needed in helping children become more aware of their next steps in learning, which make this aspect of the school good rather than first-rate.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has maintained its strengths since the last inspection and coped well with recent staff changes. The new headteacher has ensured that there is a collaborative spirit throughout the school, inspired by her first-rate capabilities in creating positive relationships and pointing the school in the right direction. The need for a common understanding among all staff about children's achievements was immediately identified as a priority. Equally, the refocusing of lesson observations on children's progress and making the ambition of action plans more measurable are necessary refinements. They represent focused developments in an already successful school. As one governor said, 'We don't need to work harder, just more smartly.' The school has already shown that it has a good capacity to improve by what it has done to cope with the recent changes. The strong focus on reading and writing, so evident in the school, indicates the priority the school places on a love of learning, clearly articulated by the leadership. Standards and achievement, by the end of Reception and Year 2, demonstrate good value for money.

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?	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

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

Thank you for your help when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our two days with you all.

You go to a good school. We saw this in the learning journey you make from Nursery to Year 2. Just think of how well you read and write by the time you are at the top of the school. You also try very hard in mathematics, but there is still a little more to do in making your work as good as possible. We know how hard all the adults work to make life interesting for you. How lucky are you to go to a school where you can 'chill out' to yoga and peer massage? Your headteacher, teachers and all the other adults care for you so well. You repay them by behaving wonderfully, such as when you swap your books in the morning, listen very well in assemblies and eat your meals at lunchtime.

As well as the amazing books, your school is packed with just the right equipment for learning. I am thinking of the light boxes in Nursery, the electronic whiteboards in all parts of the school and the odd owl that pops into school! You are also very lucky to be able to enjoy some wonderful trips that fascinate you, such as Oakwell Hall and the woods in autumn.

We know everyone wants to improve even in a good school such as yours. So, we have suggested three things that will help. We have asked your teachers to improve what you can do in mathematics by the end of Year 2. Also, your teachers need to find more ways to make sure you all know how well you have done in your learning and what you need to do next. Lastly, your headteacher needs to make sure that everyone, including governors, knows how well you are doing and what needs to be improved. Then they can all see whether you and the school have done as well as possible by the end of the year.