

# Manor School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123082
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314486
<b>Inspection date</b>	6 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christopher Parker

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	460
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ian Barnes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Hawkins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 February 2005
<b>School address</b>	Lydalls Close Didcot OX11 7LB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01235 812762
<b>Fax number</b>	01235 817416

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. He investigated the impact of the school's actions on standards in mathematics, the effectiveness of the support for the most vulnerable pupils and how the leadership identifies priorities for improvement and evaluates the impact of its actions. Evidence was gathered from the analysis of pupils' progress, samples of their work, observation of lessons, parents' questionnaires, discussions with groups of pupils, the headteacher and his deputy, the vice chair of governors, the teacher responsible for inclusion and representatives of external agencies working with the school.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than average and serves a community of predominantly white British pupils. A few pupils speak a language other than English at home.

An inclusion project, to support those at risk of underachievement because of their behaviour, is based in the school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

'Learning together and having fun, Who's for a good day? Everyone!' These are just two lines from the school rap, which the pupils sing with great enthusiasm in assembly. They reflect the sentiment expressed by a number of parents who commented on how happy their children were at school and how much they enjoy all that the school offers. The pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The school places considerable emphasis on their pastoral care and provides very effective support for the most vulnerable. One parent commented, 'The values taught to children make it a special place to be.'

Over the last few years, the school has been successful in raising standards and improving the results of national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. By 2006, results at the end of Year 6 were significantly above average and pupils were making particularly good progress. In 2007, the results suffered a setback and fell, notably in mathematics. The school has thoroughly analysed why this occurred and can point to considerable movement of pupils into the school during Year 6, which had an impact on overall performance. Nevertheless, steps were taken to ensure standards in mathematics returned to above average this year. The school's tracking of pupils' progress shows that they are on course to reach challenging targets, by the end of Year 6, and that the proportion likely to reach the higher level has doubled. The data also show that pupils, throughout the school, are making better progress this year than last. Overall, standards are above average and pupils are making good progress.

To aid the rapid recovery in standards in mathematics, the coordinator has led training to implement the new mathematics curriculum. The teachers are using this well to plan their lessons thoroughly and to set the pupils appropriately challenging tasks that interest and engage them. The teachers employ a lively and friendly style that exemplifies, 'Learning together and having fun.' Information and communication technology plays an important role in making tasks enjoyable, helping pupils to apply skills in a range of contexts and in helping staff to assess pupils' progress. The coordinator has introduced a whole-school approach to problem solving which is providing pupils with the structure and strategies to tackle mathematical problems in a range of contexts. In lessons, pupils concentrate well and respond positively to their teacher's questions. Teachers probe the pupils' understanding by getting them to explain the strategies they have used to complete calculations and the thinking behind their solutions to problems. The marking of pupils' work is conscientious but there is considerable variation in its effectiveness. Although some teachers make useful comments on work, pupils are not always given time to respond or to correct misunderstandings. Pupils have targets to help them to focus on what they need to improve in mathematics but these are rarely referred to in their work. Once pupils have met a target, the next step in their learning is not clear to them.

The prompt action taken by the headteacher and the leadership team to improve pupils' achievements in mathematics is a good illustration of how they respond positively to their own evaluations of the school's performance. The deputy headteacher's incisive analysis of the assessments of pupils' progress is a key factor in moving the school forward.

The school rightly prides itself on its inclusion and care. Support for pupils with learning difficulties who are making slower progress than their peers has improved since the last inspection. The additional adult support for these pupils in lessons is now well planned and effective. Central to the school's approach to inclusion is its support for the small number of pupils with behavioural difficulties who are at risk of exclusion. The teacher with responsibility

for inclusion works very closely with support agencies. Using the common assessment framework, they collectively provide a 'team around the child' to give coherent support. In some cases, they work with the secondary school and together create a team around the family. The inclusion co-ordinator has, over the last year, periodically evaluated the impact of this work. These evaluations show not only a marked improvement in behaviour but also very good academic progress.

The school's work with this small group of pupils is a very good example of how it is able to evaluate the impact of its action. However, the leadership team do not use this approach consistently to assess how successful it is in bringing about improvement. Some elements of the school improvement plan do not have sufficiently clear criteria against which success can be measured. Similarly, the monitoring of the quality of teaching is not linked closely enough to the progress the pupils make to provide a incisive view of the impact of the teaching. Nevertheless, the leadership team is very successful in maintaining a very caring ethos in which the pupils thrive. It has a good track record of improving standards and has reacted quickly and successfully to last year's disappointing results. The school has good capacity to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The children get off to a good start in the Reception classes because, as one parent commented, 'The settling in procedures...were really effective and made for a happy transition from Nursery'. The adults make effective use of the indoor and developing outdoor facilities and resources. They encourage independence and provide an interesting range of activities both led by adults and chosen by the children themselves.

The children listen carefully, for example, when they are learning to use words such as 'shorter' and 'longer' in mathematics. The adults usefully reinforce these words by providing interesting activities and opportunities to compare the size of footprints and measure the size of their shoes. The children are well prepared for Year 1. In some areas of learning, standards exceed expectations but in communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development they are similar to the average.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of marking and target setting in mathematics.
- Evaluate more thoroughly the impact of the teaching and improvement activities on pupils' progress.

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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?	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?	1
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 <sup>1</sup> 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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



## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Manor School, Didcot, OX11 7LB

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to me. You go to a good school and are able to learn in a very friendly atmosphere where the adults provide very good care for you. You behave well and those of you I talked to said that any misbehaviour is dealt with quickly. Some of you form a circle of friends to help others overcome their difficulties.

The school helps you to develop values that are important for your future, such as patience. Didn't it take a long time to open the parcel in assembly? Your enthusiastic singing and concentration on the story, even with the distraction of the parcel, were a good illustration of how well you behave and how much you enjoy school.

The teachers make lessons interesting and fun. They mark your work and some of you told me that you like their comments. However, the marking and target setting in mathematics are not helping you as much as they might. I have asked the teachers to make some improvements so that they always help you to do better.

You are doing well in lessons. The teachers have been working to make sure you make as much progress as possible in mathematics. I saw how they are setting you problems that make you think hard about your answers and helping those who find mathematics difficult to gain a better understanding.

The headteacher and the leadership team are always looking for ways to make improvements to the school. They have many carefully thought out plans and do a lot of work to make these improvements. However, they do not always check that what they have done has made a difference. I have asked them to do this, whenever possible.

I enjoyed being in your school. I hope that in the future it is even more successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead Inspector