

Mountford Manor Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131785
Local Authority	Swindon
Inspection number	315870
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Stephen Lake

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steven Perrett
Headteacher	Caroline Polley
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2003
School address	Bothwell Road Walcot Swindon SN3 3EZ
Telephone number	01793 536494
Fax number	01793 491588

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school which includes nursery provision. It serves an area of mainly local authority housing. The level of deprivation in the area is twice the national average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). A new headteacher is in post and over half of the teaching staff are new to the school in the last two years. Children start school with skills that are significantly lower than those expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, with many strengths. It is improving rapidly because the new headteacher has a good understanding of what works well and what needs improving. The many new appointments to the school have enabled the headteacher to develop a new senior management team with a very clear focus on raising standards whilst retaining the supportive environment so popular with parents.

Good quality care, guidance and support ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. As one parent wrote – '...helping my child to build self-confidence and self-esteem'. Pupils' enjoyment of school and the confidence with which they approach their lessons contribute well to the rapid improvement. The good quality curriculum supports pupils' good personal development and well-being and ensures that they have many interesting and stimulating things to do. Pupils know how to stay healthy and fit as seen in their recent achievement of 'Healthy School' status. They make a good contribution to the school community especially through peer mediation where they help each other understand the consequences of their actions. This is one of the reasons that behaviour is good. The skills gained mean that despite low attainment, preparation for pupils' future economic well-being is satisfactory.

Achievement and progress are satisfactory and improving. Progress in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, but children make good progress in Nursery and in their personal and social development. They start Year 1 well prepared to learn. The school focus on writing is improving progress especially in Year 6 where pupils make good progress. Standards have risen significantly since last year, but remain exceptionally low at the end of Year 6, mainly because pupils who are more able are not doing well enough. Although standards overall are below average at the end of Year 2, they are broadly average in reading and mathematics and have risen considerably in writing. Pupils with LDD make the same progress as other pupils because of the good support they receive from teaching assistants and outside agencies.

Teaching is satisfactory and improving. It is good in Nursery and Year 6. Teachers are making better use of the information on how pupils are doing to plan work. Nevertheless, this information is not always used well enough to plan work that challenges and extends the more able pupils. The teaching of writing has improved over the last year through the strategies introduced to support writing, but too few opportunities occur in lessons to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Many teachers mark pupils' work effectively but this is inconsistent and marking does not always provide enough guidance to pupils on how they can make their work better.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The newly constituted senior management team is working closely with the headteacher and the satisfactory governors to bring about school improvement. It is too early to see the full impact of the work of the new team, but the rapidly improving standards in writing are clear testament to their effectiveness. Good quality procedures for checking on the work of the school enable an accurate view of how well the school is doing. These, together with the significant improvements that have taken place recently, show a good capacity for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress by the end of the Foundation Stage from their exceptionally low skills on entry. Progress in personal and social development is good particularly in the Nursery where this is a high priority to enable children to access the curriculum in Reception. Established systems allow children to get on well with each other. Behaviour is good. The experienced Foundation Stage leader, assisted by the close network of staff, ensures that children have access to a rich and enjoyable curriculum with many opportunities to explore their environment. The school is successful in involving parents in the Nursery in actively supporting their children's learning. Adults interact positively with the children making learning fun and providing opportunities for imaginative use of language. Such interaction lessens when children enter Reception because fewer opportunities exist than in Nursery. The school has recognised this and is seeking ways to improve parental involvement in Reception to help increase the progress that children make.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Make better use of assessment information to plan lessons that challenge and extend all pupils, especially the more able, to do the very best they can.
- Ensure that marking makes it clear to pupils how they can improve their work.
- Provide more opportunities in lessons to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.

A small proportion of schools whose effectiveness is otherwise 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 in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress from the exceptionally low skills that they have when they start school, but skills remain well below those expected at the start of Year 1. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Progress is improving rapidly and is good in Year 6 because of the consistently good teaching in that year. Standards at the end of Year 2, although rising steadily, remain below average owing to the low standards in writing, but are broadly average in reading and mathematics. Standards in reading and particularly writing have risen considerably owing to the focus on raising standards in English. Standards are considerably higher than last year and rising as school initiatives to raise standards take effect, but standards remain exceptionally low at the end of Year 6. This is mainly because pupils that are more able are not achieving well enough. Pupils with LDD make good progress towards their targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' positive attitudes show their great enjoyment of school. One pupil commented, 'Activities are exciting and have been modified in response to our views to make it more fun.' Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. They know how to stay safe and feel adults in school keep them safe. Behaviour is good. Pupils are friendly, polite and courteous. Activities, such as pupils' celebration of the Eid festival, contribute to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development and enhance their understanding of living in a multicultural society. Pupils choose healthy food at lunch and snack times and participate well in the wide range of sporting activities provided. They make a positive contribution to the running of the school through the school council and 'peer mediation' system

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is improving. Teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies including information and communication technology to make lessons enjoyable and motivate pupils. Their effective management of behaviour ensures a calm environment that supports learning well. The use of assessment information to plan work matched to the needs of pupils has improved, but is inconsistent. Some lesson plans do not include enough work that challenges all pupils, especially the more able, to do their very best. Teachers give some good feedback to pupils in lessons to help them understand how well they are doing, but marking is inconsistent and too often does not make it clear to pupils how they could improve their work. Good questioning skills challenge pupils to think beyond the obvious but there are too few opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Good partnerships with teaching assistants support pupils with LDD well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is improving to better meet pupils' needs and has many good features. The focus on supporting writing through all subjects is driving up standards throughout the school. Work has started on improving pupils' mathematical skills, particularly in using their knowledge of number to make quick calculations. Rising standards in mathematics at age seven show the impact of this. Nevertheless, not enough activities are provided to challenge the most able pupils. Pupils enjoy the good range of extra-curricular activities and take a pride in their sporting and musical skills. They enjoy and value opportunities to 'live' the experience through, for example, 'India day' when they dressed as Indians and tasted Indian food. The focus on writing skills in cross-curricular topics such as these is improving standards in English. The personal, social and health education programme contributes well to pupils' personal development and well-being. Good use is made of local resources, such as the school 'forest' and visitors to the school to support the drive to improve standards.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school looks after the pupils well. They feel well supported and are confident that staff will resolve any issues of concern promptly. Positive links with external agencies are used effectively to support vulnerable pupils and those with LDD. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous in ensuring that pupils are well protected. Good quality procedures are in place to assess how well pupils are doing and provide guidance on how to do better. Detailed records on how well pupils are doing are enabling the school to check progress and identify where further improvement is needed. Pupils are well aware of the targets set for them, although targets for more able pupils are not always challenging enough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

In a short time, the headteacher has brought together a cohesive senior management team, driving forward school improvement in close partnership with the local authority. Procedures for obtaining an accurate overview of whole-school performance are rigorous and the school's self-evaluation is good. Subject leaders are developing their monitoring roles, but have not had enough time to show the impact of this. Assessment data are analysed and shared in a way that enables leaders at all levels to have a clear understanding of how they can contribute to school improvement. Challenging targets are being exceeded and rapid improvement is taking place. The satisfactory governing body provides good support and takes account of the views of stakeholders. Governors monitor the work of the school through regular visits. Budget management and strategic planning by governors have until recently focused largely on building work but the governors have recognised that they need to focus more on strategies to help raise standards when planning the budget.

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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	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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	2
The attendance of learners	3
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?	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?	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	2
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

7 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mountford Manor Primary School, Swindon, SN3 3EZ

Thank you for your help when my colleagues and I visited your school. You gave us a lot of information that helped us find out how well your school is doing and you were very polite when talking with us.

The school is satisfactory and getting better rapidly. It is making good progress in ensuring that you are beginning to learn as well as you should.

- We liked these things about your school:
- When you start school in the Nursery class, good teaching helps you settle in quickly and prepare for learning.
- You are now doing much better in English because your writing is improving.
- You enjoy school and know how to stay healthy because your teachers look after you well.
- You make a good contribution to the school through the school council and peer mediation.
- You like the targets that your teachers are setting you to help you get better at your work.
- The headteacher is doing a good job leading the many new teachers and helping them make your learning better.
- We think that the new team of leaders and the rapid improvements you have made in your learning show that your school can get even better quickly.
- This is what we have asked your school to do to help continue the improvements:
- Improve the progress that you make in English, mathematics and science.
- Help those of you who are more able to do your very best; you can help by telling teachers when the work is too easy.
- Make sure that marking in your books shows you clearly how to improve your work. You can help by telling your teachers if you do not understand the comments.
- Provide more opportunities for you to improve your speaking and listening skills.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely Stephen Lake Lead inspector