

Manor Oak Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132063
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	315912
Inspection date	14 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Norma Ball

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	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Angela Chapman
Headteacher	Mrs Yvonne Marsh
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2002
School address	Sweeps Lane St Mary Cray Orpington BR5 3PE
Telephone number	01689 828099
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

In 2000 the school opened as the first Fresh Start Primary and is situated in an area of Bromley characterised by poor housing and social deprivation. A high proportion of the pupils are from a Traveller background or from families in very challenging circumstances. Each year this has a significant impact on the school in terms of mobility, attendance and disruption to pupils' education. The school is smaller than the average. Pupils come from a very wide range of ethnic backgrounds, although fewer than average have English as an additional language. Over one-third of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is very high. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is also very high and the proportion with a statement of educational need is much higher than average. A significant number of pupils join or leave the school at different times.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's overall effectiveness is good. The determination of the headteacher and strong commitment of all staff has created a supportive, harmonious community and pupils' education is improving well.

The majority of pupils achieve well in their time in the school. This is because their learning needs are accurately assessed and are met in all classes by carefully targeted support. The most recent national tests show that standards reached by pupils in 2007 at the end of Year 6, although low, showed signs of improvement especially in the increased number of pupils gaining higher levels in English and mathematics. Although standards are low, pupils are achieving well in relation to their extremely low starting points, particularly those pupils who have been in the school since they first joined in the Nursery or Reception year. Standards in national tests are affected by the high rates of mobility, but evidence from the progress made by pupils who are in the school for sustained periods show that they make good progress.

The pastoral care given to pupils is a strength of the school. One parent said, 'they really care about everyone here, and do everything they can to help the children get on'. Pupils feel safe and grow in confidence in their learning. They have a voice in their school and carry out responsibilities maturely. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good and they have a keen awareness of staying safe and healthy. At whatever stage pupils join the school an appropriate range of support is quickly and effectively planned for them. Academic guidance is consistently good and pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

The teaching and curriculum are good. Lessons are well planned, engaging and provide the right level of challenge for all pupils. Pupil mobility means that teachers are constantly having to change their planning and alter targets, but they do this efficiently and effectively. Progress is carefully monitored and used to guide planning. This ensures work is well matched to pupils' needs. However, teachers' marking is not consistent and does not always give succinct comments linked to targets that will help guide pupils in how they can improve their work. The curriculum is enriched by a range of clubs and activities that add an important dimension to pupils' learning and often provide good opportunities for pupils to join in local community events.

Leadership and management are good. The head teacher is tenacious in pursuing improvement despite the challenging context of the school. She has been well supported by senior leaders, governors and the local authority. There are very clear structures and procedures in place and a clear direction has been established for the school's improvement. A high priority is maintained on improving standards and attendance despite the challenging circumstances facing the school. The school is not complacent and remains ambitious for all pupils to achieve as well as they can. Appropriately demanding targets are set and the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children who join in both nursery and reception make good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage from their very low starting point. By the time they move to Year 1 most are working at levels below expectations for their age, so have made good progress in all areas of learning. Routines are well established and care and welfare have a high priority. Children enjoy school and settle quickly and happily because activities are interesting and fun. They make

very good progress in their physical development because the school has developed an effective programme designed to improve balance and coordination. They do well to acquire the early stages of reading but some important opportunities are missed to encourage children to develop their speaking skills. Good behaviour, kindness and respect for others are consistently encouraged. The Foundation Stage is well led and there is a clear vision for what needs to be done to improve progress further. Staff work in close co-operation to support and guide pupils and planning takes good account of children's individual needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency and quality of teachers' marking to ensure that pupils always receive clear guidance on how to improve their work to help them achieve higher standards and reach their targets.
- Improve attendance by encouraging parents to respect the importance of coming to school regularly and on time.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school has a very mobile population and the majority of pupils come with knowledge and skills that are very low. For example, in the last school year, 40 pupils left and 36 joined the school other than at the normal times. Within an average school population of 156, this represents a very high annual movement in pupils. Some pupils, including those who join the school in Years 3 to 6, had little or no previous school experience because they were from families with no settled home. In 2007, test results show that Year 2 pupils made good progress from their low starting point although none attained the higher levels in writing. The school has initiated a whole school focus on improving writing and inspection evidence indicates this is beginning to help pupils improve their writing and spelling.

National test results for Year 6, although still low, did show an improvement over 2006. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils in Year 6 made good progress from well below average starting points and in a few cases where pupils had been in the school for several years progress was very good. Interpretations of standards in national tests need to be treated cautiously as in some years very small numbers take the tests. In English and mathematics, the number of pupils achieving higher level passes improved in 2007, especially in English. Pupils made only sound improvement in science and this remains a focus for the school. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve at the same rate as other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Very good relationships and respect for others is a feature of the school. The teachers are very good role models in this respect and pupils feel safe and well cared for. Behaviour at the school has improved dramatically over recent years. Rewards of certificates and outings encourage pupils to 'move marvellously' and have 'magnificent manners'. Attendance figures remain stubbornly below average even though the school works very hard to encourage parents to send their children to school. Pupils know why a healthy lifestyle is important and know how to keep safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Several pupils spoke of their enjoyment in exploring other cultures through looking at their artwork. Prefects and members of the school council and green council are respected by other pupils and rightly proud of the work they do for their school. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a range of

events in their local community including raising funds for charity and sports activities. The progress they make in their learning prepares them well for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are interesting and lively. Good opportunities are fostered for pupils to develop independent learning skills and they also enjoy working in pairs. Staff know pupils well and carefully match work to their needs and abilities. Pupils feel that teachers are, 'fair, friendly and help you as much as they can'. Some teachers use marking well to highlight both what pupils do well and how they can improve their work. However not all marking guides pupils clearly as to where improvements can be made. Good use is made of displays to support learning and there is a strong focus on the outside learning environment through gardening activities and the creation of the Gaudi garden. Pupils enjoy their lessons, and especially like responding to questions and joining in discussions. They do this with confidence because their contributions are valued. Well-trained learning support assistants and Traveller support staff work in close partnership with teachers ensuring pupils and who find learning difficult and those with English as an additional language are well supported.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and well planned to ensure that everything that is required is covered and that there is continuity from year to year. Planning is well matched to the needs of the children and adaptations are made where the school perceives a need. For example, they have successfully introduced a structured English scheme operating by ability rather than age so that pupils who arrive at school with low levels of English can slot in at the appropriate level. Gradually developing, but not yet really effective, is the planning of links across subjects to make lessons more interesting but also to develop further pupils skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). The school provides a good range of clubs in the lunch interval; a time that better suits the needs of most parents. All staff work hard to make lessons interesting and extend and enrich the curriculum by using a range of visitors, such as Indian dancers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All pupils are valued and the school provides a secure environment. Good procedures for ensuring the health and safety of all pupils have been carefully established. The extensive range of links forged with outside agencies is of immense value and extend the care provided by the school extremely well. Induction of new pupils, at whatever stage they enter the school, is carefully organised to ensure they settle quickly and their learning gets off to a good start. A Nurture Group caters for KS1 pupils from schools within the Local Authority, who find learning very difficult. These children are well supported so that they can integrate back into their own schools after a minimum of two terms in this nurturing environment. Assessment is well used in English and mathematics to help guide pupils to improve their work and achieve as well as they can but is underdeveloped in science. All classes have established group targets for literacy and numeracy and many pupils have individual targets that are used with good effect and pupils

say they find them helpful. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language receive good support in class and in small groups. Parents are closely involved and are provided with good information about their children's development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have very good knowledge of their school's strengths and weakness. Staff work as a close team and all are firmly committed to raising standards. A strong ethos has been established within which pupils are helped to develop personally and make progress in their learning, no matter how limited their abilities are when they join the school. Communication systems are good and used very effectively to support and monitor pupils at every stage of their education. Staff remain positive in their desire to improve standards and the school works with continuing determination to raise levels of attendance although both areas pose great challenge. Monitoring is carried out regularly and has a relevant focus. However, in some areas the links between improvement strategies are not always well defined and accountability for their success is sometimes not clear. The governing body have a good knowledge of the school and act as challenging, critical friends.

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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 ¹ reached by learners	4
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	4
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

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	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

26 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Manor Oak Primary School, Orpington, BR5 3PE

You may remember that Ms Rogers and I visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you, your teachers and other people who work in the school. It was a very busy time for you all but it gave us a chance to see the school at work and play.

We think that you go to a good school. One of the best things about Manor Oak Primary is the care and support that adults give to you. We know that you enjoy school and you make good progress because teachers give you work that is just right for you, not too easy and not too hard. We also learnt that you like to help your school and some of you take responsibilities like being a school councillor, green councillor or prefect. You know how to stay safe and healthy and enjoy taking lots of exercise.

Your teachers help you to enjoy your learning. We have asked them to take special care in marking your work so that you always have a clear idea of how you can improve and do even better work. Everyone wants to make sure that you do as well as you can at school and make good progress. You and your parents can help with this, by making sure you come to school regularly. If you miss school or arrive late it slows your progress and those of your classmates.

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly. I send you my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Norma Ball

Lead inspector