

Manor Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105041
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	324145
Inspection dates	3–4 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Allan Torr HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	122
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Abernethy
Headteacher	Mr Nigel Greathead
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Beechwood Drive Beechwood Birkenhead Wirral CH43 7ZU
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Manor is a smaller than average primary school. Most pupils are White British. There is a larger proportion of boys in the school than average and there is a small number of pupils looked after by the local authority. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is exceptionally high. Although the proportion of pupils with a learning difficulty and/or disability is double the national average, the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is around the national average. There is an Early Years Foundation Stage class for three to five year old children. Attached to the school is Beechwood Children's Centre which is managed separately by Sure Start. The school has been awarded the Sportsmark and a Family Works award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with Section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Manor Primary School has positive features but it has made too little progress to tackle the issues identified at the previous inspection and some important areas have deteriorated. This is partly because of frequent and long-term staff absences involving a high proportion of teachers. The absences have hampered the ability of staff to embed new initiatives and developments, and to lead and manage different subject areas to ensure the school improves and meets the needs of its pupils. The headteacher has been unable to delegate responsibilities and therefore retained too many roles to enable him to drive improvement. Although he has led the improvement in attendance and has kept the school running on a daily basis over the last two years of turbulence, there is no capacity to improve and tackle the school's weaknesses. Governance is also inadequate. Governors do not have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, a grasp of the school's weaknesses, or the knowledge to be able to challenge and support the school to ensure it improves.

Standards in Key Stage 1 have fallen since the last inspection and in 2008 were well below the national average, although standards in the current Year 2 are slightly higher. Standards in Years 3 to 5 are low, accentuated by long-term staff absences in those classes. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been well below average for three years, particularly in English. Pupils' writing skills are weak. Achievement is uneven across the school and inadequate overall. Some year groups and some groups of pupils, particularly more able pupils and boys, do not make the progress they should. In contrast, most pupils with a learning difficulty and/or disability make satisfactory progress because of the effective support that they receive.

There are pockets of effective teaching but the overall quality is inadequate. There is not enough good teaching to tackle the low standards and to raise achievement. Pupils do not have the guidance they need to improve their work. Too many tasks are easy and lack challenge and pupils are unaware of the steps they need to take to improve their work further. Although the curriculum is satisfactory and there are some elements that are good, subjects are not being managed sufficiently well to deliver improvements. Subject leaders do not evaluate or monitor the subjects well enough. Improvements are also hampered because a high proportion of subject leaders have been absent. Consequently, standards attained in different subjects are too variable.

Pupils and parents are supportive of the school and its work. Learning environments are bright, well decorated and welcoming and there is a calm and inclusive feel to Manor Primary. Pupils are friendly, generally well behaved, sensible and polite. They have a good understanding of how to lead a safe lifestyle and a satisfactory understanding of how to be healthy. They make a positive contribution to the school community through the school council and through taking up jobs and responsibilities around the school. They are not well prepared for their future lives because their basic skills are weak and their attendance, although improving, remains below the national average. Pupils cooperate well together and have good social development; they take opportunities to debate, discuss, and to reflect which aids their good spiritual development. Their understanding of different cultures is less well developed.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter the Early Years unit with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. By the time they leave the unit, children have made satisfactory progress in gaining the knowledge and skills expected for their age but their progress is variable between different areas of learning. Children make good progress in developing their personal and social skills and are able, for example, to choose and use resources independently, take turns, share, cooperate and to work well with others. The majority of children achieve more highly than the national and Wirral averages in their physical development. However, although there have been improvements over the last three years, children's attainment in mathematical development and communication, language and literacy skills is below national expectations. Occasionally, children underachieve in these areas of learning because the planned activities lack focus and are not matched to their abilities so that their skills are not extended. Skilled and able teaching assistants provide valuable support in the unit and ask a good range of questions which moves pupils' learning on. There is an appropriate mix of teacher-led and child-initiated activity.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English throughout the school, particularly writing.
- Improve the quality of academic guidance so that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to produce better work.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make at least satisfactory progress and continually build on their prior knowledge
- Improve the effectiveness and knowledge of governors and subject leaders so they are able to evaluate accurately the quality of the school's provision and take steps to raise standards and achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with a variable range of skills and knowledge but are below average in their mathematical development and communication, language and literacy skills. Since the last inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have declined. Over the last three years standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been at best below and sometimes well below the national average. Girls in particular attained significantly below the national average and boys' attainment lagged behind the girls. Currently in Key Stage 1, standards are beginning to recover, particularly in mathematics but they remain too low given the children's starting points when they entered Year 1.

Standards attained by Year 6 pupils have been well below average for the last three years. In 2008, for example, only half of pupils attained the expected Level 4 in mathematics. Attainment in English, and in particular writing, is low. Although pupils' attainment in Year 6 has risen during the last year as a result of better teaching, standards remain low in Years 3, 4 and 5. Pupils' learning is fragmented due to the high level of staff absence, frequent changes of teachers and the relatively high proportion of inadequate lessons. In some classes, pupils make satisfactory progress; in others they make very slow progress, leading to variable standards and achievement. Girls attain well below the national average for girls and boys perform less well than the girls, particularly in English. Higher ability pupils make inadequate progress and do not reach the higher grades they should do given their abilities. Children who attain highly by

the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage rarely continue to attain well by the end of the following key stages. However, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because their needs are met more appropriately through targeted support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils are mostly polite and welcoming. Their social development is good. They thrive on the many opportunities they have to cooperate in teams, discuss and debate issues and to perform for others. Although their cultural development is satisfactory, pupils have a narrow view of other cultures and countries. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles; however, many do not put this into practice and are sometimes inactive at break times and many eat unhealthy snacks. Pupils say they feel safe and free from harassment and poor behaviour. They have a good understanding about safety; for example the school council showed good understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet. Most pupils' behaviour is good, although at times some pupils show a slight lack of respect for adults and are over-familiar.

Generally, pupils enjoy coming to school as evidenced by their improving attendance. The proportion of pupils persistently absent is reducing. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community and are generous in their support for good causes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

While some satisfactory teaching was observed, too much of the teaching seen was inadequate. One of the main reasons for this is the same issue as highlighted at the last inspection: there is often a lack of challenge resulting in activities not being matched to pupils' needs. While this can be partly explained by the long-term absence of staff, the impact on pupils has been to restrict the progress they make. For example, more able pupils complete the same work as less able pupils and they are often engaged in low level tasks such as cutting, sticking, colouring in, or adding just a few words onto a worksheet. In too many lessons pupils are occupied, rather than challenged. Similarly, pupils sometimes complete work they have already proved they can do earlier in the year. Some teachers ask questions which enable pupils to think, reason and to explain. The majority ask questions which are too narrow and need very little effort from pupils to answer. By doing this, they are spoonfeeding the answer rather than helping pupils to make progress in their thinking. There are many opportunities to work on practical activities, work collaboratively and to support each other. There are instances, however, where this is at the expense of good individual work and pupils consequently have little to show for their efforts. Use of assessment across the school is inconsistent. In some classes teachers' marking provides good tips for pupils to improve their work; in the majority of classes marking is celebratory and does not let pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.

While there are significant weaknesses in the quality of provision, classrooms are bright, well resourced and attractive places to work. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good; staff are caring, supportive, kind and generous with their time.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school's curriculum is based on national requirements and schemes of work from the International Primary Curriculum. Pupils have opportunities to be involved in research, discussion and debate. For example, Year 5 pupils completed some good research into different habitats as a part of their science work. Other year groups explore stimulating topics such as airports, chocolate and shelters. This enables pupils to learn the connections and links between different subjects. Although this curriculum is having a positive effect on some subjects such as history and information and communication technology (ICT), the work in some classes is too low level and pupils are not using their writing skills enough. Subject leadership is weak. This means the effectiveness of the curriculum on raising standards and improving pupils' outcomes is not as good as it could be.

The curriculum is enriched and enhanced by different trips, and visiting speakers. The Diwali day, for example, helped pupils to gain a fuller knowledge of celebrations and festivals in different faiths. The annual cycling proficiency programme enhances pupils' knowledge of safety as well as their physical skills and balance.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Many aspects of care and support are satisfactory and some are good. There are rigorous and effective systems for vetting staff, for safeguarding pupils and for working with other agencies to help improve pupils' lives. Systems for checking health and safety and risk assessment are good. Effective systems are in place to intervene to support pupils with a learning difficulty and/or disability. However, pupils do not get good enough guidance and support to improve their work. Although targets are set, pupils cannot remember them and teachers do not refer to them in lessons. Similarly, the targets do not help pupils to know what to do to improve their work and to reach the next level. There is often little opportunity for pupils to respond to any comments made by teachers from previous lessons. Marking in writing, as a result of 'the big write', is better because it gives pupils clear advice about what to do to improve. Generally, marking is not used well enough to secure improvements across all subjects and varies from one piece of work to another. Teaching assistants play an important role in supporting vulnerable pupils and those at risk of falling behind. The support they give is satisfactory, but in some instances they do all the work for the pupils which hampers pupils' ability to think, reason and explain.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and can demonstrate the impact of their actions to improve some aspects of the school's work, for example in improving attendance. However, there is not enough capacity in leadership throughout the school to drive improvement. The headteacher does too much. Although he has done a creditable job in keeping the school running through two years of turbulence, leadership is not sufficiently shared among middle leaders to enable them to monitor their subjects or to take action to improve achievement. Systems are not securely in place to ensure

that staff work as a team and for senior leaders to listen to their suggestions to improve provision.

Self-evaluation is inadequate. The school's judgements about pupils' standards, progress and work are over generous. Key weaknesses in attainment, standards and the quality of provision have not been picked up. Although the local authority has put in some good support, the intensive support it received was not effective in challenging weak practice and the school has not fully engaged with the support offered.

The headteacher is effective in his promotion of community cohesion. He has analysed the local population and has a strategy for ensuring the school helps to support parents and the local community. The governors are not aware of their duties in this respect. Governance is inadequate overall. There are four vacancies on the governing body which is limiting its ability to support the school. Governors have a lack of knowledge and understanding about how to measure the impact of initiatives. They are not able to interpret data to understand how well pupils achieve. They are unsure about their role in ensuring statutory duties are met and are unable to evaluate accurately the effectiveness of the school.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	4
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

Inspection of Manor Primary School, Birkenhead, CH43 7ZU

This letter is to tell you about my recent visit to inspect your school. It was good to meet so many of you at break time, in class and in the school council meeting. It was also great to see you making good use of the two refurbished playground areas. I thought most of you were polite, sensible and cooperated well with others. I also thought most of you have a good understanding of hazards and how to lead a safe life, particularly staying safe using the internet. Most of you said you enjoy lessons, particularly the more practical lessons such as mathematics, science, physical education and art. It was certainly clear you enjoy lessons more when you are actively involved and when lessons are challenging and not too easy. Your school environment is warm, inviting and the classrooms are good places to learn and to study.

Following my visit, I have decided Manor Primary needs to improve. This means that although there are some things the school does well, in some very important areas there are weaknesses which need to be tackled quickly for you to make better progress in your learning and to reach higher standards. I have asked the school to:

- Help you to attain higher levels in your work, particularly in English.
- Improve the range of activities in lessons to help you learn more and make better progress. I have also asked teachers to improve the guidance you get to improve your work so that you know exactly what to do to reach a higher level.
- Make regular checks to ensure that you are all doing as well as should in your work.

You and your teachers will be given help and support to carry out these improvements and inspectors will visit the school regularly to check the progress everyone is making. You, your teachers, parents and governors will all need to work together to ensure the school improves as quickly as possible.