

Manea Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110638
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	325188
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2009
Reporting inspector	John Francis

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barry Cundell
Headteacher	Pamela Longridge
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 March 2006
School address	Station Road Manea PE15 0HA
Telephone number	01354 680293
Fax number	01354 680293
Email address	office@manea.cambs.sch.uk

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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited six lessons and made a number of shorter, drop-in visits to other lessons, held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including: the school improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, minutes of governors' meetings, statutory policies and the 34 parental questionnaires returned.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of boys and higher achieving girls in writing
- achievement in mathematics and science, particularly for girls and higher attaining pupils
- the appropriateness of the curriculum and the links between literacy and numeracy skills and the wider curriculum
- the school's development of community cohesion and the governing body's role in monitoring this
- the impact of the Early Years Foundation Stage on the transfer into Year 1.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school that is popular and oversubscribed in some year groups. The vast majority of the pupils are from White British backgrounds and all have English as their first language. Children start in the Reception class at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five. Attainment on entry is below the levels expected for children of this age, and well below in language skills. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Around 25% of children from various year groups leave or join the school during the year, which is higher than seen in most schools.

The school has a number of awards including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Healthy Schools Award and the Activemark for their work in physical education.

There is pre-school childcare on the school site which was inspected separately as it is not managed by the school.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a school that provides a satisfactory academic education for its pupils but has strengths in other aspects of its provision, especially pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, behaviour and their understanding of healthy lifestyles. The most impressive part of the schools' work is the outstanding provision made for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Here, excellent leadership and teaching, coupled with a high quality curriculum, means children make outstanding progress during the Reception Year. The excellent opportunities presented to the Reception children through a stimulating environment give them a flying start, not only in their academic development but in their physical and social skills. The impact of this is now being seen in Key Stage 1 where, over the last two years with consistently good teaching, standards have been improving rapidly. Children are coming into Year 1 at a much higher level than in the past and for the first time in many years, by the end of Year 2, pupils are achieving national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.

With clear guidance and planning and a strong, whole-school focus on reading and writing, standards in English have risen rapidly and are now average. This has also narrowed the gap between boys' and girls' performance in this subject. Standards by the end of Year 6, in mathematics and science, as seen through national test results, the school's tracking documentation and pupils' work, remain below average. This is particularly so for the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher levels. These were also areas for development at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are generally making satisfactory progress but this is not enough to close the gap between the school's results and the national averages.

The schools' tracking shows that pupils in Key Stage 2 are generally making the progress expected towards their targets but for higher attaining pupils, these are not always sufficiently challenging. There is not enough focus on developing the skills of the more able in mathematics and science and providing appropriate extension work for them. While teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory there are inconsistencies in areas such as marking and lesson planning. Pupils do not get clear enough guidance on what they need to do to improve or what they are working towards. This misses opportunities for pupils to be involved more directly in assessing their own work or that of their peers. In lessons, pupils and teachers are often unclear about what they are aiming to achieve by the end of a lesson or how they will measure how successful they have been. This is partly the result of teachers being unsure about

some of the specific requirements of the National Curriculum at each level.

Secure systems ensure that accurate data and regular monitoring information is gathered and analysed. Senior leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses, while accurate, is not yet translating into a fully effective school development plan. While the main areas for improvement in the plan are clear, the criteria by which they will measure success are less so. This limits the school leaders and governors ability to monitor the progress of these or make a probing evaluation of the initiatives. Nevertheless, the progress seen in recent years, for example, higher attainment in English and narrowing the gap between boys' and girls' performance shows the school has a satisfactory capacity for continuing improvement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in mathematics and science throughout Key Stage 2 by:
 - providing a range of more challenging experiences for higher attaining pupils
 - having a greater focus on practical and investigative approaches to learning
 - creating more opportunities for developing and using numeracy skills across all subjects.
- Raise the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 to consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring lessons have clear learning intentions, supported by measurable outcomes that enable teachers and pupils to judge how successful they have been
 - improving the marking of pupils' work so they clearly understand what they need to do to move to the next stage and give time for pupils to respond to the marking
 - improving teachers' knowledge of National Curriculum levels so staff can more easily identify the gaps in pupils' understanding and plan to address these.
- Improve the effectiveness of school improvement planning through:
 - developing more clearly measurable targets in the whole-school development plan and subject leaders' action plans
 - improving systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of these and using the information as part of a regular whole-school self-evaluation and review process
 - ensuring governors are fully involved in the monitoring and evaluation process to oversee the progress made towards these targets.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

3

The outstanding provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is beginning to influence the work in Key Stage 1, feeding through into faster progress and higher standards. However, this has yet to make its impact felt throughout Key Stage 2. Pupils demonstrate a good enjoyment of their lessons but this is not always being capitalised on at Key Stage 2, and pupils are not all achieving as well as they might.

There are significant differences in how well pupils achieve in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This variation is confirmed by the lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' books. Pupils in Key Stage 1, through consistently good teaching, make good progress, while at Key Stage 2, progress is only satisfactory. Pupils with specific learning needs, often in language skills, are making satisfactory progress. Their rate of progress is beginning to improve through the 'catch up' programmes in place using the skills of the teaching assistants.

Almost all pupils behave well in lessons and around school, show a strong commitment to their work and apply themselves to their tasks, even when these do not always stretch them. Some of the paired and group work reflects pupils' good social skills and a willingness to cooperate and share tasks. Pupils have a good appreciation of what they need to do to stay fit and healthy. Their commitment to improving their own health and well-being is reflected in the Healthy School award and their lunchtime choices. The school's commitment to encouraging a healthy lifestyle is clearly seen in the quality of the provision, for example, in their sports partnership, specialist teaching in physical education and the opportunities for pupils' to engage in vigorous, active play at break times. Since the last inspection there has also been a successful drive to improve pupils' attendance, and through this the school has raised attendance to the national average. The standards reached by pupils and their social development means they are suitably prepared for their transition to the next stage of education and beyond.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	3
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	3
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	3

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

Pupils' attendance	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

The quality of the school's work

The overall satisfactory quality of teaching does mask differences across the school. At Key Stage 1, good teaching builds on the excellent work of the Early Years Foundation Stage, through detailed planning and effective assessment, resulting in steady improvement. In a Year 1 English lesson, the work following up the earlier puppet show was suitably pitched to meet the needs of all pupils, and particularly extending the more able. The pace of lessons and the engagement of the children make for calm and productive classrooms.

In Key Stage 2, teachers have good relationships with pupils. This ensures they behave responsibly and apply themselves willingly to their work. During lesson observations, inspectors were giving particular attention to how teaching challenged all pupils but in particular, the more able. Good work was seen where pupils worked together in pairs or small groups. Where teaching is less effective is in providing for those pupils who are more able. Here, too much of the learning merely consolidates what pupils already know. In this respect, teaching fails to capitalise on the positive conditions that have been created. Planning does not sufficiently challenge these pupils and as a result not enough achieve at the higher levels they are capable of reaching. However, there is now much more focus on developing practical investigations in science. The observations and judgements of the school's leadership reflect those of the inspectors.

Detailed systems in place track pupils' progress over time and regular assessments add further to this pool of knowledge. The leadership team ensure that this is kept up-to-date to provide timely information to assess progress. All pupils have targets, however, these do not always reflect sufficiently high expectations for all pupils. Marking is regular but not enough gives the pupils sufficient guidance. In some instances, the teachers' lack of detailed knowledge of National Curriculum levels prevents them from identifying specific areas of weakness to enable them to address gaps in pupils' understanding.

The curriculum provides suitable breadth and interest and the promotion of literacy skills across all subjects has a high status across the school. This is not quite as effective for mathematics, although this is improving. There are particular strengths in the use of 'themed weeks' and the development of physical education. Work with other local schools is providing further opportunities for pupils to widen their interests. This is also reflected in the opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 2 to learn a range of modern foreign languages. This includes Polish, which provides a good link to the growing minority ethnic community in the region.

The school provides good levels of support and care for pupils. This is targeted well at the most vulnerable pupils and the impact of this can be seen in their progress and development. The school has also been very successful in engaging many more parents as an active partner in their children's learning. The school works well with a wide range of agencies to support the varying needs of the pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	3
Effective assessment	3
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	3
Support, guidance and care	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leaders monitor the work of the school regularly and have clearly identified the strengths and weaknesses in the provision and the outcomes. This can be seen in the great strides made in improving the provision and outcomes in English. Tracking and monitoring systems are suitably robust and through these the staff have been able to identify more accurately the wide range of pupils' individual needs. The school's commitment to promoting equality is seen, for example, in the way that it has closed the gap between boys' and girls' attainment. Supporting this are the strong links that have been developed with other agencies and providers. The school's leadership has also worked hard to overcome the difficulties of recruiting and retaining staff over recent years, particularly at Key Stage 2. Discussion with the Chair of the Governing Body confirmed that, while the governing body has only two thirds of its places filled, those governors in post work hard to overcome this. They are still able to monitor the work of the school and challenge the leadership. There is a recognition that there are still things they need to do and they have begun to work towards these through a suitably thought out calendar of activities.

At the time of the inspection the procedures to keep pupils safe met requirements. The leadership and the governing body have worked hard on identifying the needs of their local community and have a commitment to developing links beyond the school. The school has made great strides in engaging parents more fully in the work of the school and in their children's education. This continues to be a strong feature of its work and contributes well to the whole-school drive to promote community cohesion. School leaders and governors are developing a range of strategies to engage with an even wider range of groups but have not yet developed a comprehensive approach to monitoring the impact of their strategies.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	3
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	3

Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	3
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	3
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

This is the jewel in the crown for the school and better than the school's more modest appraisal in their self-evaluation. This is something recognised and appreciated by the parents. The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is quite simply outstanding. The balance of activities across all areas of learning is extremely effective and the involvement of the children in developing the activities on offer is excellent. This was perfectly exemplified in their own puppet show following the earlier whole-school performance and their work on activities such as sand sculptures and the excellent map of the village they created. The children's confidence and willingness to engage in discussion with inspectors demonstrates an exceptionally high level of social and emotional development. The class teacher and teaching assistant work exceptionally well in partnership and are constantly assessing and recording children's progress. The impact of this can be seen in the very good progress of those children with specific learning needs. Careful observations have identified their specific requirements and enabled them to achieve the same degree of success as the other children.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents are very positive about the work of the school and particularly the level of support given to their children. Parents regard this as a very caring school that keeps their children safe and were exceptionally positive about the school's drive to give pupils a healthy lifestyle. A very small number commented on bullying but this is not borne out by discussions with a wide range of pupils who say they feel safe and secure in school. Where there were any areas of concern expressed, which were few, parents might like to know that there was no pattern to these and they reflected individual concerns for those parents.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment: the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress: the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement: an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
- Capacity to improve: the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management: the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



4 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Manea Community Primary School, Manea, PE15 0HA

Mrs Ranger and I really enjoyed our visit to your school. It was lovely meeting all of you and we did feel very welcome with your good manners and friendliness towards us. This letter is just for you to tell you what we found out about your school. We have also tried to reflect some of the things you told us in our report. Your school is providing a satisfactory education but has a number of good things that we would like to share with you.

We feel that you behave well and care about each other and all of the adults take good care of you and work hard to make your school an interesting place to come to. All of you make a good contribution to your school and work hard to help others. You told us that everyone in school gets on well and we could see this in classrooms and in the playground. You told us how much you enjoy school and try your best. We can see this in the work in your books and the displays around school. Those of you in the Reception class have a wonderful time and do really well in your work. Those of you in Year 1 and 2 also are doing well. We were impressed by the good progress all of you are making in reading and writing – you have done well to improve your work. This is not quite as good in mathematics and science and we have asked your teachers to give you lots more opportunities to experiment and carry out investigations.

To help you do better we have asked the teachers to look at how they can plan your work so you make faster progress in mathematics and science. We have also asked them to tell you clearly what you are going to learn in your lessons so you will know how well you have done by the end. We feel those of you who are good at some subjects should have extra challenges so you can show how you can use your skills in other ways. This way, you can find new ways of challenging yourselves even more. We have also asked teachers to be clear when they are marking your books what it is you need to do to make your work better.

We wish you well for the future and hope you continue to work hard and get even better.

Yours sincerely

John Francis
Lead inspector

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