

Manadon Vale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113301
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	325790
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Mark Lindfield 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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	416
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	Richard Price
Headteacher	G Vaughan
Date of previous school inspection	2 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	St Peter's Road Plymouth PL5 3DL
Telephone number	01752 705345
Fax number	01752 778373

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Manadon Vale Primary School is a large school, where the majority of pupils are White British. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school provides for two classes of reception-aged children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The school has achieved the Active Mark, Investors in People and Healthy Schools awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Manadon Vale Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The headteacher has built a close leadership team that has accurately diagnosed what is needed to move it forward. The school caters especially well for pupils' personal, social and emotional development. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and are quick to voice their appreciation. Parents highlight this as a strength, with many describing how their children are 'very happy at this school'. One wrote of how their daughter 'looks forward to going to school every single day'. A number of parents commented on how the Parent Support Advisor has helped to improve the communication between the school and parents. In the words of one, she 'has been an outstanding bonus to the school team'.

Teaching is satisfactory, but the proportion of good teaching is not high enough to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress. The school has used individual tracking systems well to give staff a greater awareness and understanding of the progress pupils are making and to raise expectations. The resulting data confirm that progress varies between subjects, and that pupils have not been making the progress in science expected of them across Key Stage 2. Progress is also uneven across year groups because teachers do not consistently set suitably challenging activities for all groups of learners, and this particularly holds back progress for the most able pupils. Where teachers' planning has clearly identified the learning that will take place in a lesson, assessment information is used well to plan further lessons that build on this learning and meet the needs of all pupils. However, the school has recognised that this approach is not applied in enough lessons. Teaching assistants provide good support for those pupils who need extra help with their learning, ensuring that they do well in lessons.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, and helps pupils to develop healthy lifestyles and good social and emotional skills. All pupils learn a foreign language from an early age and there is a clear strength in the provision for music. The school's approach to distributing leadership has ensured that leaders at all levels are now contributing to school improvement by drawing up action plans to address areas of weakness. Although there are still some unresolved issues relating to the Early Years Foundation Stage that remain from the last inspection, this effective structure means that the school is suitably placed to build on other improvements such as the better tracking systems. That said, subject leaders' action plans do not always focus sufficiently on their intended impact in terms of raising pupils' achievement. Governors provide the school with good support and levels of challenge.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children behave well and are happy to learn; their personal development and well-being are good. Very good relationships with adults and with other children help them to learn about their feelings and develop a good understanding about what is dangerous and how to stay safe. Children from different backgrounds and cultures work and play harmoniously together, respecting each other well. Children come to the school with starting points above national expectations for their age, and make satisfactory progress in their learning to reach above average standards by the time they enter Year 1. They have a good knowledge of the wider world. Children willingly participate in all learning activities and they play well on their own. Opportunities for children to choose their own activities are currently too tightly controlled, limiting them from becoming sufficiently independent in their learning. The quality of care for

children is satisfactory. Arrangements for safeguarding children are appropriate and reviewed in line with the school procedures. Behaviour is well managed and staff have good relationships with parents and carers.

The quality of planning is satisfactory and ensures that each child receives an enjoyable experience in line with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Regular observations ensure adults know each child's levels well. Additional learning needs are identified early and effective intervention programmes are put in place to ensure that children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities can succeed. Good levels of adult support ensure that close attention is given to the children, although not all the adults regularly use questioning strategies to provide children with opportunities to talk and discuss their ideas. The current arrangements for planned, purposeful play and exploration in and out of doors, an issue raised at the last inspection, are still significantly underdeveloped. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Appropriate priorities have been identified for development, and there is a common sense of purpose from all adults with regard to addressing them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of assessment information to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.
- Ensure that lesson activities consistently challenge all pupils to do well, but especially the more able pupils.
- Ensure that subject leaders' action plans focus sharply on raising pupils' achievement, particularly in science.
- Increase opportunities for purposeful play and exploration for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, both in and out of doors.

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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

From their above average starting points in Year 1, pupils make good gains by the end of Year 2, where standards are well above average in reading and mathematics. The school has recognised that standards in writing, whilst still above average, are lower than in other areas and has planned an appropriate range of actions to improve this. Pupils do not consistently build on the good start made in Years 1 and 2 and their progress slows across Years 3 to 6. Although test results in Year 6 are generally above average, progress has declined over the recent years, and most noticeably in science. More careful tracking of pupils' progress has identified the previously low rates of progress of more able pupils, especially in science. The school's actions in increasing opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their science investigation skills have begun to improve progress, but standards are still lower than in other subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their individual needs are identified early and they are well supported. Pupils who speak English as an additional language quickly receive good support and they make good progress as a result.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy at school, and both their awareness of and approach to their own safety and that of their peers are outstanding. Although incidents are extremely rare, they know who to turn to if they need help and are confident that their problems will be dealt with. Pupils' social and moral development is good; they get on well with one another and they understand right from wrong. They are polite to visitors, and are confident and articulate when talking to them. Pupils frequently comment on their enjoyment of school and their good rates of attendance provide further confirmation. Pupils' behaviour is welcoming and friendly around the school and they show good attitudes in lessons.

Pupils know about eating a balanced diet and are actively encouraged to have healthy snacks at break times. Those bringing a packed lunch fully understand what constitutes a healthy meal and the popularity of the salad bar at school lunchtime also reflects this. Pupils make a good contribution to their school community with older pupils helping younger pupils in the playground and in serving and clearing away at lunchtime. The school council represents pupils well and their views have helped improve the school in a number of ways. Pupils are quite rightly proud of their musical tradition, which plays a significant part in supporting their good spiritual development; the excellent choir performs at many local events. Pupils' understanding of other cultures and communities in Britain is satisfactory, but links that reflect the diverse nature of Britain are less well developed. Pupils' good skills in literacy and numeracy give them a sound foundation to transfer successfully to secondary education and eventually to the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers form good relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well. They encourage pupils to work effectively with each other in lessons, supporting their learning. Pupils are able to work independently but opportunities to do so are restricted occasionally when too much time is spent on instructions or in introducing the lesson. Teaching assistants make a good impact on progress when they give direct teaching to individual pupils or small groups.

Teaching is consistently satisfactory, but there are relatively few lessons where pupils of all abilities are stretched to do their best. In these better lessons, work is closely matched to the pupils' different abilities, based on accurate assessments of their learning in previous lessons, and teachers make the intentions for the lesson explicit, so that pupils fully understand what they are expected to learn.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy coming to school because good use is made of excursions and residential trips which encourage their personal development. Visitors, such as musicians and theatre groups, are welcomed into the school and enhance pupils' cultural development, although links to more diverse cultural groups are limited. The range of out-of-school activities is appropriate but opportunities are more restricted for younger age groups. Provision for music is particularly good. Pupils are given opportunities to learn to play instruments in Year 3. Many go on to

participate to high standards in the orchestra and choir at events such as the Tavistock Music Festival. Over recent years the school has made satisfactory progress in developing the curriculum, increasing the opportunities for pupils to learn through themes and topics that link subjects together and promote creativity. Appropriate procedures are being developed to gauge the impact of these modifications on pupils' progress in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Caring teachers and support staff encourage pupils to enjoy their learning and reach high standards. Pupils of all cultures and backgrounds are quickly integrated into the life of the school and well supported by enthusiastic staff. The school has effective procedures for ensuring pupils are safe, and these include staff and volunteers being vetted for their suitability to work with children. Appropriate arrangements for first-aid training and relevant health and safety checks, including risk assessments, are also in place. Pupils feel safe and free from intimidation or harm. The school has recently taken direct action to reduce the rate of absence and this has increased attendance to good levels. Support staff work closely with class teachers to quickly identify learners who have additional needs and provide them with specific support. This contributes to the successful start made by younger children.

The quality of the school's academic guidance is satisfactory but assessment, including the marking of written work, does not consistently let pupils know what they have done well and what they must do in order to improve. For example, assessments of experimental and investigative science are strong in Years 4 and 6 but are not used so well in other year groups to plan pupils' next steps in learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has formed a close staff team. Their evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate and securely based on a thorough individual pupil tracking system. Satisfactory systems to check on the quality of teaching have accurately identified better use of assessment information as an area for staff development. Governors are supportive of the school. They are well aware of its strengths and weaknesses, and their close monitoring and scrutiny of the work of the school ensure that they provide good levels of challenge. Subject coordinators are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills and their subject expertise through training and they provide good support for colleagues. The leadership team has planned appropriate actions to improve the school, but these do not yet consistently focus on raising achievement or clearly identify the gains that will be made in pupils' progress.

The school has completed an audit of its contribution to community cohesion, although actions to address the specific areas raised have been limited as yet. Target setting is realistic and its impact on raising achievement, particularly for the more able pupils, is satisfactory. The school has not fully resolved the key issues from previous inspections. Some aspects, such as the use of assessment data, have improved, but others remain, such as providing Early Years Foundation Stage children with a better balance of teacher-led and free-choice activities.

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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	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which 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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
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?	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	3
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	3
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

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

13 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Manadon Vale Primary School, Plymouth PL5 3DL

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. Manadon Vale is providing you with a satisfactory education. The school takes care of you and helps you to feel very safe and well looked after. That is one of the reasons you enjoy school so much and are keen to learn and do well. You told us that you enjoy coming to school and how proud you are of your singing and orchestra. We were pleased to see how well you all get on together and how polite you are. You kindly help each other out around the school and know all about a healthy diet and eat plenty of salads! The headteacher and all the staff are a close team and make school enjoyable for all of you. They are clear about what the school needs to do to improve and many of them help to draw up plans to make things better. We have asked them to make sure that these plans always focus on helping you to make better progress, particularly in science. We hope you will help by concentrating really hard in your investigations!

Your standards of work across the school are good and the teaching is helping you to make satisfactory progress, although those of you who are capable of learning quickly do not always make as much progress as you could. When teachers plan lessons well, they add work that is a little bit harder onto what you learnt in the lesson before, and this helps you to do well. However, this does not always happen so we have asked staff to try and do it more often, and to make sure that they do not set work that is too easy for you. We have also asked teachers to check your answers carefully so that they are clear how well you have done and what you need more help with.

Children in the Reception classes also enjoy their time in school and behave well. They are well looked after by the adults in their classes. They are encouraged to play and learn with all sorts of equipment and games during the day, but do not regularly have the chance to play and learn outside. We have asked the school to try and organise their classrooms so that they can choose to go outside throughout the day.

Thank you once again for making us feel welcome and showing how good you are at talking and explaining things.

Yours faithfully

Mark Lindfield HMI