

Manor Park Church of England First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113791
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	325885
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Colin Lee

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	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	356
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	Nicola Mann
Headteacher	Jane Mockridge
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Mellstock Avenue Dorchester DT1 2BH
Telephone number	01305 268741
Fax number	01305 268407

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a larger than an average primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and the range of these difficulties or disabilities is very broad. Pre-school, breakfast and after school clubs are based on the school's site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It constantly and successfully strives for excellence in all aspects of its work. It is also a very happy school, where there is much laughter that reflects the pupils' love of learning and the way in which they and adults work so closely together. Achievement and standards are excellent. Pupils make outstanding progress from the moment they start school. The rates of progress are consistent year on year. This results in standards improving from broadly expected levels when they enter the Early Years Foundation Stage to well above the expected levels by the end of Year 4.

The excellent academic outcomes are matched by the high quality of pupils' personal development and well-being. This reflects the strong emphasis placed on pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education. Pupils' enjoyment of school is obvious and they say there is nothing they would want to change. They know that they all have a responsibility for showing care and respect for one another. Behaviour is good and attendance, now well above average, is much improved since the previous inspection. All other aspects of personal development are excellent, including pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles and of safe practices in and out of school.

Outstanding teaching and learning are the main reasons for pupils' impressive academic and personal development. Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together, providing an excellent model of cooperation for pupils to copy. The high calibre of the teaching assistants is one of the strengths of the school. They have tremendous impact on pupils' progress, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils are very involved in their own learning due to their mature ability to reflect on their work and identify how it can be improved. The quality of learning is especially high when teachers set a clear target for pupils to work towards before they start an activity. This, however, is not totally consistent throughout the school and progress in lessons tends to be slower when such guidance is not provided.

The curriculum is exciting. Pupils greatly enjoy the emphasis placed on linking subjects together and the way that many activities relate to real life situations. At the same time, a strong emphasis remains on ensuring that all pupils acquire excellent basic skills. This, alongside pupils' social maturity and experience of enterprise-related activities, means that pupils are prepared exceptionally well for the next stage in their education and for their future lives. Pastoral care too has many strengths and reflects teachers' strong commitment to meeting the social and emotional needs of pupils and their families. All pupils thrive on the excellent care, guidance and support that they receive.

Outstanding leadership and management at all levels stem from the headteacher's inspiring leadership and drive for improvement. The highly effective teamwork makes excellent use of the expertise and enthusiasms of all adults in the school community for development of the provision. The school has an excellent capacity for further improvement because it has shown how successfully it has addressed areas for development identified by the previous inspection, and pupils' progress has significantly improved since that time.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

A rigorous induction process, involving staff visits to pre-school settings and parental visits to school, enables children to settle quickly into early routines. Staff work very closely together. The children's welfare is paramount and they are nurtured in a safe environment. This age group is superbly well led and managed.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills generally at a level expected of a four year old. They make excellent progress as a result of the outstanding teaching and curriculum offered in all six areas of learning. They leave this key stage having reached their early learning goals and a good proportion are at an even higher standard, working within National Curriculum Level 1.

Behaviour is excellent and children's very positive attitudes to work are seen in their obvious enjoyment of everything they do. They talk excitedly about their experiences and love having the opportunity to use digital cameras to record their work. They are also given opportunities to take cameras home, enabling them to give a presentation to their class the following day. Very detailed planning of the curriculum provides an excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Systematic observations and assessments of children's learning by all staff are used very effectively to plan the next steps for each child. Much of the children's learning is completed in small focused groups using the very stimulating classrooms and external facilities. However, the attractive outdoor area does not have all-weather protection in order to maximise its use at all times.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure pupils always know the targets and success criteria related to each activity to enable them to make as much progress as possible in every lesson.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The school builds successfully on the rapid progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the end of Year 2, pupils' standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are well above national averages. This has been the case for the last three years. The current Year 2 pupils' achievement and standards are especially commendable because of the above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in that year group. There is an even higher proportion of such pupils in the current Year 4 and yet their excellent progress in the last two years has raised standards to high levels. Close to half of the year group are at levels in English, mathematics and science that are approaching those normally expected by the end of Year 6. This reflects a steady rise in standards at this age since the previous inspection as a result of improvements in teaching and the rigorous checking of pupils' progress throughout the school. Pupils are successfully achieving the very challenging targets that the school sets for them each year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils show an obvious enjoyment of school. They say that 'Learning is exciting and fun and teachers explain things well.' Their relationships with adults and with each other are excellent.

They understand their rights and responsibilities and show great respect for one another. Behaviour is often excellent but it is judged good overall due to the occasional unrest and lapses in concentration by a minority of pupils in the few lessons where pace is slower and work not sufficiently challenging. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. Cultural development is good. The school is placing appropriate priority on broadening further the pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures. Pupils have an excellent understanding of health and related issues. They feel safe around the school and know how to look after themselves.

The very active school council feels it is listened to and makes a difference to the school. A cricket club was set up at the members' request and councillors are working on a welcome pack for pupils joining the school. Pupils in general make a significant contribution to the local community, taking part in local festivities, visiting the local allotments and singing in local old people's homes. Business enterprise starts young here as, for example, the Reception class sold produce such as lettuce and radishes to the staff.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils make outstanding progress because they are taught so well. Many aspects of teaching have a really positive impact on the quality of learning. The stimulating, exciting learning environments created both indoors and outdoors for the Early Years Foundation Stage classes are matched in other years. Teachers work closely together to plan lessons in year group teams. Teachers from different year groups also meet in 'learning teams' to check that there is a smooth continuity and progression in pupils' learning over time. All work is carefully matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to reflect on the quality of their own and others' work. They do this constructively, recognising good features and suggesting where improvement is possible. By Year 4, such self- and peer- assessment is often extremely perceptive and contributes significantly to the pupils' overall progress.

Teachers ensure that the purpose of lessons and key learning objectives are explained and understood by pupils. Many teachers then go a stage further and establish, often with suggestions from the pupils, what different groups have to do to complete a specific activity successfully. This setting of success criteria or targets is excellent practice that helps pupils make progress but it is not entirely consistent throughout the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an extremely rich and varied curriculum for its pupils. It very successfully combines progression in the skills that should be acquired in each subject, with a linking of subjects into topics. This strengthens pupils' essential basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology through activities that are exciting and meaningful. Teachers make excellent use of the school grounds as a resource to stimulate learning. An extensive range of activities is provided outside the school day. These activities are greatly enjoyed and take-up levels are high. The curriculum is also enhanced by an exciting programme of events during the year such as theme days, educational visits and input from visiting specialists. Pupils' work in the creative arts is particularly enriched by these experiences and

many prominent displays around the school celebrate the impressively high standard of artwork of pupils of all ages.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides exemplary pastoral care for its pupils. Safeguarding procedures comply fully with current requirements. Risk assessments and child protection procedures are rigorous. Pupils say they feel safe in school and all members of the school community show the highest levels of concern for pupils' welfare. This support contributes significantly to pupils' learning and personal development and well-being.

Academic guidance is generally of a similarly high quality. It is based on the excellent assessment and tracking of pupils' progress. The support given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding and enables them to make excellent progress. For all pupils, the guidance provided by marking of their work is detailed and informative. Short-term target setting for next stages in learning often features in this marking but references to such targets in lessons are more variable. Pupils' progress in a small minority of lessons slows down when they are not reminded of, for example, a specific skill they need to try and improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Improvement in provision in order to constantly increase pupils' achievement and raise standards is central to the school's strategic planning. This is done collectively and the headteacher's emphasis on teamwork is a major factor in the excellent improvement since the previous inspection. The involvement of all members of the school community in constantly checking their practice and its impact on pupils' learning means that the school knows itself very well and its self-evaluation judgements are accurate. The school also benefits from the significant expertise and experience present in the governing body, which ensures that it sets itself challenging targets. All subject leaders are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating pupils' performance, in identifying areas for development and in taking action to improve pupils' achievement. Subject leaders' plans are closely linked to the priorities in the school development plan and this reinforces the shared sense of purpose in planning for the future. Pupils' progress is carefully checked and, if ever this is less than expected, immediate action is taken to provide relevant support programmes to help pupils to catch up.

The current priorities of curriculum development and community cohesion are closely linked. Various well planned initiatives successfully involve parents in school life and their children's education, broadening the school's partnership with communities within the region and in other countries.

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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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

12 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Manor Park CofE First School, Dorchester DT1 2BH

Thank you for making us so very welcome in your school and for talking to us so willingly. We thoroughly enjoyed seeing you at work. You told us how much you enjoy going to school. This is not surprising because you have an excellent school that is very successful in helping you to learn. These are some of the things it does particularly well.

- From the moment you start in Reception you are making excellent progress in your work and often reach high standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the time you reach Year 4.
- You behave well and you take your rights and responsibilities very seriously. We saw how you are always willing to help one another at work and play and this makes your school a friendly, pleasant place where everyone feels safe and happy.
- You have an excellent understanding of the importance of eating healthily and taking regular physical exercise.
- Teaching is outstanding and your teachers work hard to plan many interesting things for you to do in your lessons. This is helping you to learn well.
- All the adults look after you very carefully and make sure that you are safe and get help whenever you need it.
- The headteacher leads the school superbly well and all the adults, including the governors, work very well together to improve it.
- We have made one main recommendation to help your school get even better.
- Make sure that you always know the targets and success criteria for your activities so that you make as much progress as possible in every lesson. .

We hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Manor Park to be an even better school.

Yours faithfully

Colin Lee

Lead inspector