

Manuden Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114979
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	326103
Inspection date	17 March 2009
Reporting inspector	David Speakman

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)	99
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	Mrs Barbara Cheney
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Talbot
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Street Manuden Hertfordshire CM23 1DE
Telephone number	01279813370
Fax number	01279817065

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: whether high standards in English and mathematics are reflected in other subjects, how the school widens pupils' multicultural and global awareness, how governors have improved their work and what special features support the school's self-assessment of outstanding overall effectiveness.

Inspectors gathered evidence from observations of lessons and pupils' work, parental questionnaires, school self-evaluation documents and discussions with the headteacher, governors and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized primary school. It serves the villages of Manuden and Berden, from which most pupils come. Children start their Early Years Foundation Stage education at the beginning of the Reception Year. Attainment on entry is similar to that normally expected of children of this age. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is smaller than in other schools. An average proportion has a statement of special educational needs. The main identified needs include moderate learning difficulties and those on the autistic spectrum. The number of pupils coming from minority ethnic backgrounds is much lower than in most schools and none is at an early stage of learning English.

Manuden Pre-school Playgroup operates from the school hall. It is managed independently of Manuden's governing body.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Pupils achieve exceptionally well in this outstanding school. Standards at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 are exceptionally high and have been at this level for a number of years. Not only are test results in English, mathematics and science exceptionally high year-on-year, but high standards are reflected in pupils' work in other subjects. From the moment they start school, pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and to become independent learners at a very early age. From the very beginning pupils are taught to work things out for themselves. They are taught the skills they need and are provided with numerous opportunities to use and apply what they have learned. This helps prepare them extremely well for the next stages of their education and life beyond school.

The school sets out to promote pupils' personal independence as well as their academic achievement through providing an all-round education. Personal development is outstanding. Pupils are confident in their relationships with other pupils and with adults. They are proud of their work and what they achieve. This level of maturity and the excellent academic standards help produce articulate, enthusiastic and confident young people. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. There is a strong sense of a family community in the school. 'Manuden has a great sense of community spirit. My daughters have grown immensely in confidence and are thriving academically,' wrote one parent. This sums up the views of many parents. Pupils themselves say they feel very safe in the school and free from any form of aggression. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. The school actively promotes opportunities for pupils to help each other in this safe, secure and exceptionally caring environment. Older pupils receive simple first-aid training so they know what to do should they spot anyone in difficulties. Staff are specially trained in skills to support a wide range of emotional and personal situations if they arise. The school has excellent partnerships with other schools and agencies that help support pupils' education and promote their well-being. All safeguarding procedures were fully in place at the time of the inspection.

Pupils are very aware of how to maintain healthy lifestyles, both in terms of keeping to a healthy diet and engaging in lots of opportunities to keep physically fit. Pupils certainly enjoy school a great deal and their attendance is good. They speak about school with great enthusiasm. They find lessons interesting and enjoyable and are pleased with the progress they are making in their learning. Residential trips, visits, visitors, special days and curriculum events all make the school a very interesting place. 'We get a lot of fresh air,' commented one pupil. As part of the excellent curriculum pupils take part in many outdoor activities. The school has an allotment used to grow vegetables which they cook into dishes such as pumpkin soup. 'Welly Wednesday' provides younger pupils with opportunities to take short trips out of school to learn about their local environment.

Community cohesion is promoted effectively at local and national levels and it has a good global dimension. Being a small school in a rural village, staff ensure pupils have a good community awareness. They contribute to local life. The school makes full use of its national and international contacts, with a range of visitors to talk about different lifestyles in a diverse culture. Special events, including World Peace Day and a European Language Day, celebrated in school, build pupils' global awareness well. The local Member of Parliament has spoken to pupils and they organised their own internal election.

The quality of teaching is outstanding at all stages of the school. Teaching, assessment of pupils' work and the academic guidance provided are very closely linked and result in rapid progress. Regular monitoring of standards and progress means that teachers are fully aware of individual pupils' learning needs and they meet these very well. Lessons are organised very efficiently and where there is more than one year group in a class, teachers make sure that their expectations of pupils at all ages and levels of attainment are equally high. Teaching assistants work very well with the teachers and provide highly effective support to the groups of pupils with whom they are working. Pupils are happy with the advice they get on how to improve their work. Marking is helpful in that it tells them what they are doing well and how to improve on any weaknesses noted. It focuses on pupils' targets. Pupils are fully aware of their targets and when they achieve them. These are challenging, match teachers' high expectations well and contribute significantly to the rapid academic progress pupils make. Pupils are increasingly involved in assessing the quality of their own work and that of others. This is done with careful guidance, with pupils being fully aware of what they are looking for to judge a piece of work as good or better.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The staff work within a culture of strong teamwork and mutual support. Each one contributes significantly to the highly effective monitoring and evaluation process, the outcomes of which are used to set a very clear agenda for improvement. School self-evaluation is accurate in identifying these areas, such as providing a covered outdoor work space for young children or developing the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and the internet to support pupils' work at home. The work of the governors is good and has improved since the previous inspection. They organise their work effectively, work in close collaboration with the school and have a good knowledge of how well the school is doing. They provide effective levels of support and challenge, holding key personnel accountable for improvement. They have recently completed a self-evaluation of their work and have identified a small number of areas in their own work that they wish to develop further. They use their good knowledge and understanding of the school's performance to support their involvement in strategic planning and the monitoring of development and improvement. Bearing in mind the clarity of vision for school improvement, the high standards and outstanding achievement that have been maintained continuously since the previous inspection and other improvements made since then, the school has an excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Pupils achieve exceptionally well in this outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage. They make rapid progress in all areas of learning from the moment they start school, so that when they move into Year 1, standards are above those expected for their age and the great majority of children are working comfortably with Key Stage 1 National Curriculum work. This is because of a number of excellent features. Provision is expertly led and managed. Early Years Foundation Stage children share a class with Year 1 and the quality of teamwork between the two teachers is excellent. Efficient and effective deployment means that pupils experience high quality teaching, which results in excellent learning. Both teachers show considerable skill in turning all activities into meaningful and enjoyable learning opportunities, successfully combining different areas of learning. Expectations are high and tasks challenging so children are constantly stimulated throughout the day.

There is an excellent balance between teacher-led activities and those that children choose for themselves, and children have opportunities to learn indoors and outside. However, there is

no covered area so learning outside has to be planned with the weather in mind and lacks spontaneity. Resources are good. The highly effective use of these provides an exciting learning environment with interesting and engaging themed areas, supporting the curriculum very effectively. Assessment is thorough and rigorous. Adults have a very clear picture of how well each individual child is doing. ICT is used very well by adults to improve the effectiveness of teaching presentations and by children in learning activities. Children's personal, social and emotional development is very strong. Children are confident and very happy, showing high levels of enjoyment in learning and being in school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the outdoor area adjacent to the Early Years Foundation Stage classroom so that the school can create an outdoor classroom for use in all weather conditions, and which reflects the indoor provision.

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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	1
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?	2
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	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**

18 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Manuden Primary School, Bishops Stortford, CM23 1DE

Thank you all for making us welcome when we visited your school recently and for helping us find out what we needed to know. A special thanks to those of you who gave up some of your time to talk to us and to those who shared your work with us. We really enjoyed listening to you read your own work and talk about it; you seem very proud of what you do. We found meeting you and your teachers, visiting lessons to watch you work, and finding out what you think about school very valuable in helping us decide just how good your school is.

You go to an excellent school and those of you we talked with spoke highly of your time there. All the staff work very well together to provide you with a high quality education. Teaching, the curriculum and the quality of care shown for you are all outstanding. You all make excellent progress in lessons and reach very high standards by the end of all key stages.

You help a great deal by behaving exceptionally well and trying hard to do your best. We were impressed by how well you respond in lessons and your ability to work things out for yourselves. We liked the sensible way in which you make friends with others, care about each other and show very impressive manners. You help to make others feel safe in school. Those of you we spoke to said how much you enjoy school and find it interesting. You are prepared very well for the next stages of your education.

To make things even better, we are asking the staff and governors to provide a covered area by the Reception classroom so that young children can learn outside as well as indoors, whatever the weather.

We wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

David Speakman

Lead inspector