

Manor Field Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116055
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326319
Inspection dates	31 March –1 April 2009
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	149
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 Allison Reid
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Pywell
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Haydn Road Brighton Hill Basingstoke RG22 4DH
Telephone number	01256 350 300
Fax number	01256 842 139

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Manor Field Infant School is smaller than average, but has a large Early Years Foundation Stage. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The majority of these pupils have mild learning and speech, language and communication difficulties. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average, and the vast majority of pupils speak English as their first language. The headteacher, who was employed on an acting basis over the last year, was confirmed in post a week before the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of Manor Field Infant School is satisfactory. It is a school in transition and is rapidly improving. The school's emerging strengths, particularly better teaching and assessment, are starting to raise attainment and improve pupils' achievement. Currently, because the positive impact of changes is only just starting to be felt, standards remain below average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage from their very low starting points. They enter Year 1 with standards that are below expectations. Attainment in Year 2 has improved, but is still below average.

School leaders and managers have a very good grasp of the urgent need to improve standards and achievement. The new headteacher correctly prioritised the school's actions by focusing on improving the accuracy and use of assessment and developing better teaching and learning. The school's more accurate view of children's starting points and their learning needs has enabled it to focus more rigorously on improving pupils' achievement. This is reflected in its clear and practical strategic plan for the future. Governors support the plan and monitor its progress against the school's objectives. The school's recent track record is of brisk improvement and its capacity for the future is good.

The school's in-depth monitoring of teaching and learning and subsequent actions have improved classroom practice. Teaching and learning are now good. Work is carefully tailored to offer pupils the correct degree of support and challenge. However, on some occasions, pace and expectations are too low. Pupils like their lessons because most teaching is engaging and the good curriculum leads to stimulating activities being planned and delivered. Pupils are keen to learn and, prompted by their teachers, their behaviour is good.

Pupils' personal development is good. Their relationships with their teachers and one another are supportive and they often show a high level of maturity for their age. The 'friendship group' and 'chat team' encourage pupils to express their opinions and give them greater ownership of the school community. They participate in local events keenly and raise money for charities. However, their knowledge of other cultures in Britain is limited. Pupils are well cared for. All staff show strong concern for their well-being, and safeguarding arrangements are robust. Pupils' work is carefully marked and they receive good advice. The school is starting to formalise this feedback into setting literacy targets for individuals but does not consistently set pupils targets in mathematics or other subjects.

Parents' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive and none expressed any significant concerns. One typical comment was, 'My children love their school and come home every day with smiles'.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start the Reception Year with skills and understanding that are much lower than those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. By the time they enter Year 1, they have achieved well and their skills have improved in all areas so that they are below expectations, rather than well below. Children make a good start because the school's entry arrangements are so thorough. Careful preparation of parents and children ensures that, when they arrive at the school, children are well prepared for school life.

Teaching and learning are good. Well-planned lessons provide the correct balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities with plentiful opportunities for children to write, read and express their views orally to address weaknesses in literacy. However, occasionally expectations and pace are too low. Good accommodation and stimulating resources develop children's independence. Accurate assessment helps staff keep a close eye on children's progress and plan to meet individual needs. Teaching assistants work in strong partnership with teachers to promote good learning.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are well cared for. Each child has a named adult who knows his or her learning and personal needs thoroughly. These key people foster constructive relationships with parents. Arrangements to keep children safe are robust and there are warm relationships between adults and their charges. The pattern of good behaviour seen throughout the school starts with the consistently high expectations set by adults in the Reception classes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics, by ensuring teaching is based on consistently high expectations and proceeds at a good pace.
- Provide clear guidance to pupils on how to improve in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Ensure pupils have better opportunities to improve their understanding of life in multicultural Britain.

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

Pupils enter Year 1 with standards that are below those usually seen for their age. Their attainment is particularly low in speaking, reading and writing. They leave school in Year 2 with standards that are below average. Their achievement, including that of pupils with mild learning difficulties and the few who do not speak English as their first language, is therefore satisfactory.

The school's understanding of standards and achievement was, until relatively recently, mistaken. This was due to over-generous assessment, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage. When the current headteacher was appointed in an acting capacity, she initiated verification procedures that led to a complete overhaul of the school's assessment methods. Regular external moderation now ensures that assessment is accurate and this has enabled the school to focus on standards and achievement much more effectively. The school has set challenging targets for the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils' current improved performance, inspired by improvements in teaching, indicates that the school is on course to raise attainment and meet its targets. While pupils' attainment remains below average, it shows clear improvements on earlier years.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school greatly. They report, 'Our school's very nice, because everyone's kind and sharing'. They get on very well with one another and their teachers and work well collaboratively. Behaviour is good. These children are not naturally restrained and do have occasional lapses,

but they are usually mature and respectful and the pace of learning is rarely interrupted by unseemly behaviour. Attendance is average. Pupils develop a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They know the importance of fruit in their diet and try to avoid junk food. Many take a keen part in the opportunities for sport and exercise that are offered.

Pupils know how to stay safe, benefiting from advice from the local fire and police services. They are also well aware of the potential dangers from the internet. Their developing independence and teamwork skills help to prepare them for the future, but pupils are held back by their below-average standards in the key skills of literacy and numeracy. This means that their preparation for the next stage of their education is satisfactory.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, but the school has not promoted pupils' knowledge of other British cultures sufficiently and, in consequence, their understanding of the multicultural nature of Britain is limited.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

More thorough monitoring has led to recent improvements to teaching and learning. Good practice is common, but is not yet fully reflected in national test results or pupils' achievement.

Teachers set high expectations for pupils. They praise pupils for good work, setting a positive tone in classrooms. Pupils respond well and concentrate hard. This promotes improved learning. They listen attentively and so can settle down to tasks with no fuss. Lessons often comprise brief, interesting activities to improve pupils' concentration. For example, Year 2 pupils greatly enjoyed taking part in various practical activities to improve their measuring skills. These involved pouring water into various containers and using computers. Their strong involvement in all activities meant that their learning was good.

Teaching assistants are often proactive in lessons and work constructively with teachers and pupils. Usually little time is wasted in lessons, but sometimes tasks run on for too long and the pace of learning then suffers. In closing sessions, pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they have found easy and where they have had difficulties. This information helps teachers to plan for the future.

A flow of regular, accurate assessment information keeps a close track on how pupils are getting along. Careful analysis of this data ensures that no one falls behind and that minority groups are fully supported so that they achieve as well as everyone else.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well adapted to pupils' needs. The school operates a structure to link the teaching of subjects together and this makes lessons more interesting. Whole-school focus weeks, where one topic is central to all planned activities, build on pupils' interests and develop independence. Curriculum plans recognise the vital importance of improving pupils' literacy skills by providing good opportunities for speaking, listening, reading and writing in most other subjects. Personal, social and health education is given strong emphasis and has had a positive influence on pupils' behaviour and personal development.

Pupils have the chance to learn out of school when they visit places like the 'Living Rainforest'. The popular lunchtime 'Huff Puff' club, run by pupils from the adjacent junior school, provides good extra opportunities for gentle exercise. Pupils have a few opportunities to attend extra-curricular activities, but the school accepts that the present range of clubs is limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good quality care for pupils is evident in the high level of commitment of all adults in promoting their health and safety. All procedures for safeguarding are very robust and regularly reviewed. Pupils are happy that they are well looked after and are confident that if there are any problems, teachers will help to sort them out. Pupils who have speech, language and communication and other difficulties receive very good care. Their needs are identified early and the school rapidly targets assistance to ensure that the achievement of these pupils is at least equal to that of other pupils. Regular reviews of such pupils' progress involve parents closely and the school makes good use of external agencies when required.

Pupils receive good information about their standards and progress, both verbally and in the thorough marking of their books. Many have clear ideas about what they should do to improve their standards of literacy. However, they do not receive clear targets in mathematics or other key subjects and this means that they are less sure of their next steps in these areas.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has made a significant difference to the school. She quickly identified the inaccurate assessments that were painting an over-optimistic picture of the school. Better staff training and thorough monitoring led to a re-evaluation of pupils' standards and achievement. This was subsequently confirmed by external validation. After this, the headteacher led the school in re-calibrating its priorities.

The school now self-evaluates thoroughly and senior staff have a clear view of its priorities. The strategic plan provides a straightforward roadmap for the school's future development. Governors support the school well and, using their growing understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, are starting to provide a useful degree of challenge. Lesson monitoring, involving senior staff and external experts, has improved teaching and learning and is raising standards.

The school has begun to analyse its contribution to developing community cohesion. It has strong links with the local community, including the church. However, it does not do enough to promote pupils' better understanding of more distant British and global communities. The school works closely with its neighbouring junior school and local pre-school groups and makes considerable efforts to engage parents in their children's learning.

There have been numerous changes in the school since the previous inspection and the school is now on an upward trajectory. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	3
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**

23 April 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Manor Field Infant School, Basingstoke, RG22 4DH

Thank you for all the help you gave me during my visit to inspect your school. It was very good to meet you. I was glad to find out how much you like your school.

Manor Field is a satisfactory and improving school. The headteacher and staff have changed the way the school is run and started to improve many things. The teaching is now good, so you learn well. The mixture of subjects you do (called the curriculum) is also good and helps keep you interested in your work. These good things mean that standards are improving, but they are still below average. Your achievement is satisfactory.

You are well cared for and get good advice about how to improve in English. Your personal development is good and I was very impressed by your very sensible behaviour. Well done!

I have asked the school to improve three important areas:

- improve standards and achievement by making all teaching interesting and lively
- give you better advice how to improve in mathematics, science and ICT - if you are unsure how to improve, you should ask your teachers
- provide more chances for you to learn about other cultures in this country.

Once again, thanks for all your help. It was great meeting you.

Yours faithfully

John Carnaghan

Lead Inspector