

Cedars Manor School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 135211 |
| Local Authority | Harrow |
| Inspection number | 329056 |
| Inspection dates | 12–13 March 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Gordon Ewing |

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 | 3–12 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 531 |
| 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 | Mr Vijay Jagjivan |
| Headteacher | Mrs Heather Lace |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Whittlesea Road Harrow HA3 6LS |
| Telephone number | 020 8428 5845 |
| Fax number | 020 8420 1730 |

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Age group | 3–12 |
| Inspection dates | 12–13 March 2009 |
| Inspection number | 329056 |

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Cedars Manor is a larger than average school that caters for pupils aged 3 to 12. As part of its Early Years Foundation Stage the school has two Nursery and two Reception classes. In 2007, the school was formed from the amalgamation of a first school and a middle school. The senior management teams of both schools were merged to create the new leadership team.

Reorganisation consultations are currently ongoing to change the age of transfer to secondary school to 11 years. The school also integrates seven pupils with hearing impairments. A designated Children's Centre is due to open in Spring 2009.

Pupils come from a broad range of social and cultural backgrounds. The largest group represented is of White British heritage and several other minority ethnic groups are present in smaller numbers; these most often include pupils of Asian British and Black British African origin. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is well above the national average. A high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, is double the national average. Pupils' additional learning needs most often relate to moderate learning difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The number of pupils who join and leave the school throughout the school year is higher than average. The Cedars Pre-School is privately managed and was inspected separately from this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Cedars Manor is a good school that is steadily improving. The majority of parents and pupils agree. The headteacher's vision, encapsulated in the 'Cedars' Way' is shared and supported by all who are associated with the school. This vision is the driving force that has helped to establish a new and effective school where pupils of all abilities achieve well. As one parent wrote, 'Cedars Manor is so good.' The staff are very committed to pupils' pastoral care and good relationships help them to learn well.

Children get off to a secure start in the Nursery, and achieve well from their much lower than expected starting points. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2, but the high instances of pupils joining and leaving the school has an impact on standards. Thus, standards remain average overall by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Year 7 pupils are currently working at those levels expected for their age in English and mathematics, and above the expected levels in Science.

Teaching is good across the school, and most lessons engage and challenge pupils. A particular strength of the teaching is how pupils are encouraged to apply their basic skills to a wide range of other subjects. Good teaching and learning results in good overall progress when considering pupils' starting points. In particular, the high proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language, and those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make good progress. This is because they are well supported and communicate with increasing accuracy and confidence, often reaching average levels in their work. There is skilled support for pupils with hearing impairment, and several parents have highlighted how well pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities develop their confidence and self-esteem, and consequently achieve well.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Many pupils enjoy coming to school and benefit from the interesting curriculum and numerous extra activities. However, attendance is below average and, though the school strives to improve attendance, a noticeable minority of pupils do not attend regularly. Standards of behaviour are inconsistent. Behaviour is generally good in lessons, and the vast majority of pupils show evident enjoyment and engagement in class. At break times, play can be boisterous and aggressive. The school is aware of this and is currently reviewing its approach to behaviour management. Pupils themselves feel secure and report that bullying and racial incidents, though infrequent, are dealt with effectively. Pupils' understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle is good. Attendance at extra-curricular activities, particular those related to sport, is high. Pupils are well prepared for their future life as learners and as young citizens through their secure development of basic skills, their ability to work together collaboratively, and their growing awareness of their place in society, both locally and beyond.

Teachers use a range of strategies to set targets for pupils, but their impact is variable. Target setting in Year 6, for example, is rigorous and informs pupils well about how to improve further. Consequently, Year 6 pupils know their targets with confidence and are developing well as independent learners. However, other year groups use different approaches that have little evident impact on extending pupils' learning. Teachers' marking across the school, though accurate and supportive, rarely shows pupils how they can develop their work and extend their

skills. Consequently, opportunities are missed to promote greater progress and develop pupils' independent learning skills.

The committed staff have worked hard under the headteacher's good leadership to make considerable improvements since the amalgamation. Middle leaders are enthusiastic and are developing their leadership skills effectively. Governance is good. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and has set a clear agenda for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Children settle well into the daily routines because the school makes very effective links with parents through the carers' and toddlers' group and home visits. Children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are well below those expected for their age, particularly in language and literacy, and in social and emotional areas of learning. Many children are new to learning to speak English when they join the school.

An interesting curriculum, good teaching and very high-quality care, within a secure environment, support children well. As a result, they make good overall progress from their much lower than expected starting points. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's knowledge and skills have developed well, but overall they are below average. In particular, their personal development is good. Children learn to cooperate with each other, developing good attitudes to their learning. There is a strong focus on helping children to work independently. As a result, children happily initiate many activities for themselves and show high levels of concentration. Children also do especially well in learning how to link letters and sounds because of the introduction of the new phonic scheme. This helps children to develop important skills for their reading and writing.

Leadership is good. Assessment is thorough and identifies children's needs accurately so that they receive targeted support. Good planning ensures that the differing needs of the children are met. Children are set targets systematically, and their progress is monitored frequently so that any underperformance can be identified quickly. Leaders recognise that outside learning is an area for development. Although the outdoor area adds much enjoyment to children's learning, the planning and organisation of the outdoor space in the Nursery is not very imaginative, so opportunities to maximise children's learning are missed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Work closely with parents to improve attendance.
- Take additional steps to improve pupils' behaviour, particularly in guiding them to accept personal responsibility for their actions.
- Refine marking and target setting, so that pupils receive consistent guidance on how to improve in order that they become increasingly independent learners.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are gradually improving and pupils achieve well. Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is consistently good across the school, so that pupils reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. This is often despite the high numbers of pupils who join the school at unusual times throughout the school year. The school has taken decisive action to support all learners in improving their writing skills. This is evident in many lessons, where

literacy skills are used to good effect across the curriculum. Furthermore, specific intervention programmes have been especially successful in helping pupils to catch up lost ground in English and mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress. An important factor in their success is the support that they receive from the skilful team of teaching assistants, who work hard to complement the good teaching. The school strives, with success, to ensure that pupils from a wide range of ethnic groups, including new arrivals, make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of pupils' development are satisfactory. Pupils' behaviour in lessons has improved as a result of a whole-school focus, so that it is now good. Outside the lessons, however, some pupils participate in rough play and find it difficult to moderate their behaviour without adult intervention. Relationships, overall, are good. One pupil's comment, 'We're all from different cultures here, but we all get on together,' reflects the way that pupils appreciate the ethnic diversity of the school. Pupils enjoy opportunities to contribute to school life through their roles on the school council, and are able to give examples of how they have made a difference, such as in the way they contributed views on the colour of the school uniform. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. For instance, in a literacy lesson, pupils were able to explain why it is important to wash their hands before preparing a sandwich, and how eating salad helps to keep them healthy. Pupils' enthusiasm for the wide range of clubs offered and the contribution these make to their healthy lifestyles is reflected in the high take-up rates. However, attendance is persistently well below average, despite good liaison with the education welfare officer and a range of intervention strategies used by the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is usually well paced, challenging, and tuned accurately to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils learn new things quickly in a secure way. Pupils enjoy school because most lessons are interesting, relevant, purposeful, and have a beneficial effect on pupils' achievement. One said, 'Teachers make learning fun'. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and the classroom atmosphere is encouraging and engaging. In some lessons, where activities are not challenging enough or when teachers are supporting individuals, a minority of pupils lose focus and can be easily distracted. A strength of all teaching is the degree to which skills learned in literacy and numeracy are applied across the curriculum, so that learning is consolidated and reinforced. Pupils collaborate well and use discussion effectively, for example with their 'talk partners', to clarify ideas and check understanding. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards, and information and communication technology, which increases pupils' enjoyment and concentration in lessons. Classroom displays celebrate pupils' work well and provide a vibrant learning environment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has been adapted well to meet the wide range of pupils' needs, especially those who are learning English as an additional language or who have learning difficulties, so that they all make good progress. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and themed days such as 'India Day' and the trip to St Albans Cathedral. The promotion of pupils' awareness of their place within the wider community is good. Activities like the school's 'Duke of Cedars' award scheme and active links with schools in London and Uganda contribute considerably to pupils' appreciation of the global community. One pupil commented, 'We are gifted because we have so much.' The encouragement given to pupils to apply skills across the curriculum contributes well to their economic well-being. The international curriculum adopted by the school has established strong links with Uganda, and pupils are proud of their personal contribution to sustainability in central Africa.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of the school's pastoral care and support to pupils is good. Health and safety, together with child protection arrangements, are robust. The Healthy School programme ensures that pupils pay good attention to the development of a safe and healthy life. The work of the learning mentors and visiting specialists contributes much to pupils' good achievement. For example, the support of the speech therapist, and the hearing-impaired teacher, alongside good links with external agencies, contribute positively to the good progress made by pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities. Language support for pupils who are learning English as an additional language is effective. Within this positive picture, academic guidance is inconsistent. Individual targets are set using a range of strategies, but most pupils do not know their personal targets with confidence, which hampers them from reaching higher levels in their work. Teachers' marking is sometimes good but overall it is inconsistent, and thus not all pupils are clear about how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Senior leaders have worked tirelessly to provide a smooth transition during the amalgamation of the two schools. The headteacher, ably supported by her deputy, has created a strong sense of purpose that is moving the new school forward effectively. There is a clear and convincing commitment to raising standards. For example, the school's leadership recognised underperformance in writing and in mathematics, and swiftly introduced effective intervention activities and new resources to raise standards and increase rates of progress. The positive impact of these measures is clear, and reflects the school's good capacity to improve. The school's improvement planning sets out a realistic agenda for the future.

Community cohesion is good and well promoted, as is evidenced by the fact that Cedars Manor is an inclusive school where considerable strides have been made in raising pupils' awareness of their place in the local, national and global communities. Leaders are reaching out to the local community through providing additional support to non-English speaking parents.

Middle leaders are increasingly playing a pivotal role in tracking the impact of their work on pupils' achievement. Governors are well informed, effectively hold the school's leadership to account, and are playing a central part in the establishment of the new Children's Centre, which is due to open later in the year. They are at an early stage in monitoring the impact of the school's actions on outcomes for pupils.

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 |
|---|----------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | |
|---|----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | NA |
| 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? | 1 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

Achievement and standards

| | |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| 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? | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 3 |
| The attendance of learners | 4 |
| The behaviour of learners | 3 |
| 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 | 2 |

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? | 3 |

Leadership and management

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 |
| 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**

26 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cedars Manor School, Harrow, HA3 6LS

You will recall that I visited your school recently with two other inspectors to find out how well you are doing. Thank you for being so polite, friendly and welcoming. We enjoyed seeing you at work and talking with you about your school experiences. You, as well as your parents, told us that Cedars Manor is a good school, and we agree.

Here are some of the good things that we observed at Cedars Manor.

- All the staff have worked really hard to make the joining of the two schools as smooth as possible.
- You get off to a really good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and overall you make good progress throughout the school.
- By the end of Year 6, you reach standards in English, mathematics and science similar to those of most other schools. Year 7 pupils are doing especially well in science.
- You carry out responsibilities, such as in the school council, with enthusiasm and commitment, so you are helping to make Cedars Manor even better.
- You eat healthily, take good amounts of exercise and are growing into healthy, caring and confident young adults.
- Your lessons are interesting and the school provides you with many opportunities to go on trips and join after-school clubs.
- Your efforts to support others, both locally and in Uganda, are commendable.
- All the adults take good care of you and you clearly feel safe at school.

We were surprised, however, that though you behave well in most lessons, in free time or when you are unsupervised some of you lack self-control, and your behaviour is less good. Secondly, we were disappointed to see that not everyone attends school as often as they should. Finally, we noted that some of you are not sure about your learning targets, and your teachers' marking does not give you clear advice about how to improve your work further. We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to work more closely with you and your parents on the following things.

- Improve behaviour, particularly in free time and when you are not closely supervised, so that you can make the most of your education at Cedars Manor.
- Improve your attendance.
- Make sure that teachers' marking and target setting are used more effectively to help you in improving your work, so that you make even faster progress.

With everyone working together in this way, Cedars Manor will become an even better school. With every best wish for the future.

Yours faithfully

Gordon Ewing

Lead Inspector