

Mandale Mill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130378
Local Authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	341037
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Millie Scaife
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Wright
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 14 lessons and observed all 11 class teachers. They held meetings with the Chair of Governing Body, staff, and groups of pupils. They analysed 58 questionnaire responses from parents and carers and looked at questionnaires from staff and pupils. The team also looked at the pupils' progress data, documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils, school policies and procedures, scrutinised pupils' current and past work and spoke to the School Improvement Partner.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the current achievement, progress and attainment of all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those new to learning English, those who are more-able and talented and those in the assessment unit
- the capacity of leadership and management to sustain improvements in the quality of learning and to ensure consistently good progress.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. Just over two-thirds of the pupils are from White British heritage, with just under one-third from a minority ethnic heritage, largely Pakistani. One in four pupils is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion eligible for a free school meal is three times the national average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is just above average, with a broadly average number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school manages an eight place assessment unit for younger children who have severe learning difficulties. The school provides adult learning classes for parents and families. It participates in a collaborative arrangement with four other local schools to focus on behaviour management issues.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils' achieve well academically and personally. The headteacher leads the school with excellent drive and enthusiasm and the staff team is committed to ensuring that the school continually improves. Strengths and areas requiring development are well known. Positive action taken since the last inspection has led to year-on-year improvements in pupils' achievement, as well as in a range of areas of provision. Over the past three years, for example, the school has made concerted efforts to improve the quality of pupils' writing and this has resulted in them making excellent progress in English. This demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve further.

At the centre of the school's success is the very strong focus on ensuring high quality care and support for all pupils and these areas are outstanding. A happy, friendly, caring climate is created for all pupils, and all are equally valued. Those pupils with additional needs or who are potentially vulnerable receive further, very well-targeted support that enables them to participate fully in school life and to achieve as well as their peers. Indeed, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those in the assessment unit, make excellent progress due to highly effective classroom intervention and support. Pupils enjoy school. They generally behave well and any inappropriate behaviour is extremely skilfully managed. School councillors take their responsibilities seriously and are keen to make a contribution, for example, through improving the quality of play at break times.

Children arrive in Nursery with skills that are well below expectations for their age and pupils reach average standards overall by the time they leave Year 6. Although progress in mathematics and science is good, it is less rapid than in English. In particular, more-able pupils do not always reach the standards of which they are capable in these subjects, because tasks do not always develop their thinking and reasoning skills fully. The quality of teaching is good overall. The checks made on pupils' progress are thorough and systematic. Opportunities are sometimes missed to use assessment information to prepare activities that are well-pitched to pupils' different needs and to identify the next steps in learning. Play-based activities enable children to make good progress in Nursery and Reception, but with fewer opportunities to capitalise on pupils' own interests in Year 1, the rate of progress slows a little. The curriculum allows pupils to make good progress in their basic skills, but does not always provide sufficient enough first-hand experiences to help promote reasoning and analytical thinking.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and standards in mathematics and science, including for the

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more-able and talented pupils, by:

- broadening the range of curriculum experiences to allow pupils to apply their skills to solve problems
- ensure that all activities are challenging and provide opportunities for pupils to evaluate, explain and give reasons for their solutions.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to achieve greater consistency, by:
 - providing more play-based learning for younger pupils
 - making more imaginative use of activities to match the needs, interests and abilities of all pupils
 - sharpen the use of assessment information to inform lesson planning and the next steps in their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils are keen to learn. They do as they are asked and concentrate well in lessons. When given thought-provoking, demanding activities pupils apply their skills well to the challenges presented and make good gains in their knowledge and understanding. This is seen most commonly in English. Although the quality and breadth of tasks in mathematics and science have been extended to promote pupils' problem solving skills, there is scope for more consistent challenge. Nevertheless, pupils make good progress overall, with most groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, learning at similar rates. The exception is those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those in the assessment unit, who progress particularly well because of the high quality specialist support they receive.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils understand the benefits that a balanced diet and regular exercise can bring. They report that they feel very safe and trust staff, who are always on hand to listen to any concern or worry. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of right and wrong and grasp the link between consequences and actions. Pupils are happy, friendly and helpful and enjoy very good relationships with staff. The constant encouragement that pupils receive, especially the more vulnerable, boosts confidence really well. Attendance is average and persistent absence has significantly reduced.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In the most effective lessons, the promotion of thinking skills captures pupils' interest well, and deepens and develops their ability to apply their knowledge to new situations, such as when solving problems. High expectations coupled with searching, open-ended questions are used to probe pupils' understanding and extend their knowledge. This very effective practice is evident in many English lessons, but is not yet consistent in all subjects. Relationships are very good and staff are supportive and encouraging. In a few lessons, learning lacks pace and activities do not always capitalise on pupils' interests and push them to apply their skills and think for themselves. Good assessment systems ensure that progress is systematically checked and intervention and support is effectively targeted. Teachers are alert to any gaps in pupils' understanding. Nevertheless, there are occasions when pupils are not given enough information to help them to improve.

The curriculum promotes the acquisition of basic skills well and subjects are increasingly linked together to maximise learning opportunities. The extra-curricular activities and visits offered are broad and are appreciated by pupils, for example, visiting the Crucial Crew event, which provides pupils with the skills to manage road safety and fireworks risks.

Pastoral care is outstanding and parents and carers appreciate the time staff spend sensitively helping their children. There is an extremely strong 'family feel' within the school. Exceptional support is provided for those newly arrived pupils, including those new to this country and to the assessment unit. Staff, including the bi-lingual and parent support workers, are highly effective in supporting those vulnerable pupils with

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emotional and behavioural needs. Careful attention to the needs of pupils from the assessment unit, boosted by effective help from support agencies, enables them to successfully learn and play alongside mainstream pupils. The school places strong emphasis on the benefits of regular attendance and this contributes to improving patterns of attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

A hard working and confident team of staff are committed to getting the best out of pupils. Governors are wholehearted in their support and make a positive contribution to its direction. They increasingly recognise the benefits of holding the school to account. Subject leadership is being strengthened as managers develop the essential skills to evaluate the impact of their actions on pupils' learning. Comprehensive systems are in place to regularly check pupils' progress. The school's relationships with parents and carers are excellent and family learning initiatives help boosts their children's achievement. Good procedures are in place to safeguard pupils. Recommended practice is fully adopted and practice is especially strong in relation to child protection. Relationships are harmonious and tension free because the school promotes equal opportunities exceptionally well. This is also reflected in the excellent achievement of more vulnerable pupils. Positive action has been taken to ensure those more-able and talented pupils achieve their full potential and a more consistent pattern of high achievement is beginning to emerging. A positive contribution is made to community cohesion and a variety of links and celebrations give pupils an insight into diversity of beliefs and cultures locally, nationally and globally.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

On entry into Nursery, children's skills are well below those expected for their age. Learning is made enjoyable with a range of fun activities which ensure that children settle quickly, happily and confidently. Children are extremely well cared for and looked after. All are encouraged to play a full part in activities. Routines are clearly established and independence fostered well. Resources and activities are well organised and children are able to move freely between indoors and outdoors, despite some constraints in accessing the outdoor space. Children are encouraged to initiate their own learning and follow their interests, as seen, for example, when they were organising their dinosaurs in a swamp. However, opportunities to explore and investigate outside are sometimes limited. Skilled, probing questioning consolidates and extends children's thinking. They respond very positively to adult guidance and advice, and as a result they thrive and behave well. A strong focus on acquiring language and number skills supports their achievement well. Observation of achievement is thorough and systematic, although assessments are sometimes generous when judging the extent to which goals have been achieved by children. Welfare is given a high priority. Excellent relationships with parents and carers support learning effectively. Children make good progress and achieve well with all working towards the goals expected for their age by the time they leave Reception. This includes those newly arrived and learning English for the first time. The provision is well led and managed with strong teamwork promoting effective learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

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Almost a third of parents and carers returned the questionnaire outlining their views of the school and the overwhelming majority of those were extremely positive about all aspects of its work. Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed overall, and found that the school is working hard to tackle any aspects that could be stronger.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mandale Mill Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 195 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	60	22	38	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	64	19	33	1	2	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	52	25	43	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	52	27	47	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	35	60	23	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	55	22	38	4	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	45	30	52	2	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	26	45	28	48	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	50	23	40	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	31	34	59	3	5	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	41	32	55	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	33	57	24	41	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	62	20	34	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



17 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mandale Mill Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS17 8AP

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when the other inspectors and I visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time at Mandale Mill, particularly the discussions we had with you. We would like to tell you our judgements about your school. Your school provides you with a good quality of education that has a number of strengths.

- The staff look after you and care for you exceptionally well and make certain you are all equally valued and included in all activities.
- The staff work very hard to make sure all of you improve and make at least good and at times excellent progress in your work.
- Your behaviour and enjoyment of school life are good and this is reflected in your improving attendance.
- The school enjoys excellent relationships with your parents and carers, and there are good links with local community groups and schools.
- Your headteacher and other leaders work hard to ensure your school continues to improve.

When you leave school, the standards you reach are in line with the average reached nationally and are higher than this in English. To help your school get even better, we have asked for some improvements to be made to improve the quality of teaching to make sure standards rise in mathematics and science. These will give you more opportunities to use your thinking skills to solve problems and help more of you reach higher standards. We have also asked that:

- more appealing activities are provided to capture and hold your interest
- all staff use information from assessing and marking your work to plan your lessons and to help you improve your work.

You can play your part by continuing to work as hard as you can. Thank you for helping with this inspection. I hope the school will continue to improve and build on its strengths.

Best of luck to you.

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts

Lead inspector

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