

Manor Park Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School

Mellstock Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 2BH

Inspection dates 11–12 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides the school with strong direction that is steering the school successfully through a significant period of change.
- By developing an effective team approach to leadership and management, the headteacher is managing staffing carefully to sustain pupils' improving progress throughout the school.
- Governors and senior staff fully share the headteacher's high aspirations for continued improvement and support the headteacher effectively in improving the quality of teaching.
- All staff strongly promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They do their utmost to secure the school's vision to 'provide a happy, safe and nurturing environment enabling everyone to learn and grow'.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy excellent relationships with adults and with each other.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good, and is particularly appreciated by parents during the comprehensive school re-building programme. Parents also work very supportively with staff and welcome the way they are kept fully informed about the work of the school.
- Teaching is typically good across the school. Occasionally it is outstanding.
- The mostly above-average standards that pupils attain by the end of Year 2 and the higher-than-expected levels of attainment reached at the end of Year 4 reflect good achievement.
- Early years provision for children in the Reception classes is good. As a result, children enjoy school and make good progress. Many excel in their personal development because of the high quality care they receive.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The levels of challenge presented to pupils in some classes do not always match those high levels seen elsewhere in the school and in the best teaching. As a result, some pupils do not make the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils demonstrate their increased understanding when responding to marking. This sometimes delays or limits the progress pupils make.
- Pupils' skills in handwriting are not developed strongly enough as they move through the school. At times, this reduces pupils' confidence and masks the otherwise good quality of their expressive writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors attended two assemblies, looked at learning in 24 lessons, and saw the work of 15 teachers. The lead inspector was accompanied by the headteacher during several of these observations.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including systems for checking progress, records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures, and the school’s analysis of how well it is doing and how it plans to improve. Records of checks on the quality of teaching were examined, along with details of visits to the school made by the local authority.
- The inspectors talked to pupils about their work, and listened to individual pupils from Reception and Years 1 and 2 read. They also looked at samples of pupils’ work across a range of subjects and classes, especially writing.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, school staff and groups of pupils, including members of the school council. Inspectors spoke to individual pupils in lessons and around the school. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with an adviser from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the views expressed in the 57 online responses to Parent View and informal meetings with parents during the inspection. Questionnaires completed by 38 members of staff were also analysed.
- The inspectors considered the school’s use of primary sports funding.
- Inspectors also examined the school’s work in updating procedures for checking pupils’ progress within the new National Curriculum.

Inspection team

Alexander Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jacqueline Good

Additional Inspector

Adrian Massey

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This first school, which caters for pupils aged 4–9, is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after) is below average.
- Across the different year groups, a large proportion of disadvantaged pupils also have special educational needs.
- Early years children attend the school's three Reception classes on a full-time basis.
- Pre-school, breakfast and privately run after-school clubs are based on the school's site. As they are not managed by the school, they are not included in this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching and move pupils' achievement from good to outstanding by:
 - extending pupils' ability to write fluently and confidently by improving the teaching of handwriting
 - sharing the best practice evident in the school to secure equally high levels of challenge and expectations of pupils' work and better progress in all classes
 - improving the quality of pupils' responses to teachers' marking to show how they have developed their understanding.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Continuing changes in staffing since the last inspection, including at a senior level, are being well managed by the headteacher to sustain good teaching and pupils' learning.
- The headteacher and governors have secured capable senior teachers and a strong leadership team has developed. Teamwork has been extended through all levels of leadership. Currently, middle leaders are playing a greater role in checking the performance of teachers and ensuring that pupils' skills are more quickly developed to accelerate their progress.
- Some leadership roles have not been operating long enough to secure high quality teaching and learning in all parts of the school. Even so, leaders and managers check the work of the school effectively. As a result, they have an accurate view of the school's strengths and the areas which are in need of development.
- Leaders ensure that the management of teachers' performance and teachers' movement along pay scales is sharply focused on improving teaching and raising pupils' achievements. They have also aided staff in adapting learning activities and developing effective systems for checking pupils' progress which meet the raised expectations of the new national curriculum. These developments are quickening pupils' progress during a potentially disruptive period of building work and show the school's capacity to bring about further improvement.
- All staff and governors work well together to sustain the school's caring ethos. Professional relations are fostered strongly and help to provide a calm and purposeful atmosphere in which effective teaching and good pupils' behaviour can flourish.
- The staff of the school work in unison to eliminate discrimination and to ensure that all pupils are provided with equal opportunity. For example, pupils across the range of ability, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, derive equally successful benefit from the additional adult help they receive. Disadvantaged pupils are also provided with supportive extra adult help. Their good progress reflects the school's effective use of the pupil premium funding.
- The curriculum is carefully planned. It provides a well-balanced and broad range of lively learning experiences which stimulate pupils' interest and promotes their good efforts and behaviour. For example, themes based on the Chinese New Year and Chinese cooking promote reflection, good attitudes and engagement in learning. Leaders also ensure that a secure emphasis is also placed on developing the pupils' reading, literacy and mathematical skills.
- Links with other schools, visits to the community, and assemblies based on questions such as temptation and tolerance strongly promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Each week teachers discuss themes such as kindness and forgiveness, which pupils write about in their 'Reflection Journals'. These thought-provoking activities extend pupils' understanding of British values and prepare them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils also learn effectively about democracy. They participate in elections to the school council and organise their own calendar of the charitable activities they wish to organise and support.
- Physical education is given good emphasis. It has been strengthened by the school's comprehensively planned and effective use of primary sports funding. In cooperation with local schools, specialist coaches are employed to train staff and to provide a broader range of sports activities for the pupils.
- The school checks the impact of this work on pupils' health, skills and participation. Competitive sport has become, in particular, more popular as a result. Pupils themselves have commented that more pupils now attend clubs and are enjoying new sports such as multi-skills, tag-rugby and basketball.
- The local authority has aided the school in developing new leadership roles and settling in new teachers. In partnership with governors and the diocese, the local authority is helping to improve the school's facilities.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors visit the school frequently to see pupils' learning at first hand for themselves. They meet and talk with staff, pupils and their parents on a regular basis. Governors also receive detailed evaluations about pupils' progress from the headteacher and join senior leaders in checking pupils' work. Governors question staff leaders closely to acquire a good knowledge of the way teaching impacts on pupils' progress. They know the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors also know how well pupils are performing in relation to other schools nationally. Governors have been fully involved in the development of methods for holding teachers to account for pupils' progress, including when they receive additional adult support. Consequently, they are very aware of how performance management is being

used to tackle underperformance and to reward good teaching. Governors often join staff with their training and provide them with informed and effective support. Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and that effective checks are carried out on staff prior to appointment. They have carefully considered the dangers which may arise during the current building work and have implemented effective procedures to keep pupils safely away from risk. Governors also take full advantage of the training provided for them by the local authority to ensure that they meet their statutory responsibilities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Around the school, pupils are polite and most of the time share excellent relationships with each other and adults.
- Most pupils work together well and happily share ideas during lessons. The very youngest children and the oldest pupils in the school often show excellent attitudes that significantly aid their learning. At times, some other pupils need reminders from staff about paying more attention in lessons.
- Given the considerable constraints to free movement because of the re-building works, most pupils conduct themselves very sensibly as they move around the school. Behaviour is not outstanding overall because a few pupils need and receive adult reminders about how to show more consideration to other pupils at break times. Older pupils acting as 'peer problem solvers' also help to ensure that minor squabbles do not become too worrying.
- Pupils and their parents also agree that behaviour is good and that there are few incidents of more significant misbehaviour such as bullying.
- Pupils know about the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the school's 'Rights Respecting' values and understand and respect other people's views, beliefs and cultures.
- Pupils say that there is rarely any bullying in school and should it occur, then 'Adults would quickly stop it.'

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Staff ensure that all pupils, especially vulnerable pupils, are well cared for. Consequently, the pupils say that they feel safe in school.
- Pupils are confident that adults listen to them and do their best to help them if they become worried about anything.
- Pupils learn well about how to keep themselves safe, including when using computers and when travelling to school each day, either as cyclists or pedestrians. Some have noted that the reduced outdoor space currently available at break times is leading to some minor collisions during ball games. Even so, parents and pupils say that the school is a safe place in which to learn.
- Teachers and parents work very supportively together in promoting the importance of regular schooling to the pupils. As a result, pupils' attendance is consistently above average and also reflects their enjoyment in coming to school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has a beneficial influence on pupils' learning and achievement as they move through the school.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively and there is no disruption to the positive learning atmosphere established in all classrooms. Occasionally some teachers do not question or challenge pupils deeply enough to ensure their listening is sufficiently focused to provide them with better understanding of the topic. As a result, a few pupils lose interest and their progress slips.
- Teachers and their skilled teaching assistants are successful, however, in steadily advancing and securing pupils' highly positive attitudes to learning by the time they leave the school. All adults demonstrate clear speech and promote pupils' thinking skills effectively.
- Classrooms are well resourced, with books and hand-held computers being readily available. Teachers use

displays well to present basic information, for example to aid pupils' learning of basic literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers also provide displays known as 'topic walls' to record pupils' work and to show how learning intentions are being developed.

- Pupils use displayed information readily to help them with their tasks. For example, pupils in Year 4 were seen referring to guidance displayed on the walls, thoroughly checking their previous work in books to help them solve mathematical problems.
- Teachers and teaching assistants support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs well. Teaching assistants also play an effective role in the teaching of phonics, reading and basic number facts. They provide good support to pupils, offering a range of practical activities both in and out of classrooms.
- Pupils learn to read well. This is because teachers ensure that pupils read regularly at school and they support parents in helping their children to read at home. Reading and phonics are taught effectively in all classes, and pupils frequently share and talk about books and favourite story characters, both with each other and with adults in school.
- Pupils benefit from using interesting themes which link subjects together. For example, pupils in Year 3 excitedly acted out their scenarios from *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* to enrich their understanding and ability to write play scripts. Pupils' work in their mathematics and writing books also shows that their literacy and numeracy skills are taught well.
- Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and accurately. They use praise appropriately to lift pupils' confidence, and have improved the way they give pupils guidance about how to improve.
- Pupils are not always encouraged to respond fully or quickly enough to the written advice they receive from the teachers. This restricts the rate and amount of progress they make. For example, the degree to which teachers teach and encourage pupils to form their letters and to write neatly varies across the school. This restricts the quality of pupils' handwriting overall.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- In recent years, leaders have managed changes in teaching staff effectively to secure pupils' good progress. Leaders have worked well with teachers to strengthen the way they check and support the learning needs of pupils across the range of ability.
- Pupils' needs are now identified and tackled well at an earlier stage. This helps good teaching and ensures that the successful start children make in the early years classes continues through Years 1 and 2. As a result, pupils achieve well and standards are typically above average in Year 2.
- Good and sometimes even stronger learning continues through Years 3 and 4, especially when pupils apply themselves to their work to the best of their ability, as seen, for example, in a Year 3 lesson when pupils demonstrated excellent learning by eagerly sharing ideas about the place-value of numbers. As a result, attainment in mathematics, as well as in reading and writing by the end of Year 4 is above the level normally expected for pupils of this age and shows good achievement.
- Effective teaching and learning in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) helps pupils to build good reading skills and, increasingly, their writing skills. Attainment dipped in 2014 in Year 2, including in reading, but school records show that this still represents good progress from lower starting points.
- Over time, and currently, pupils' attainment in reading is typically above average by the end of Year 2, reflecting good progress throughout Key Stage 1. Pupils of all abilities continue to develop their reading skills well in response to good teaching as they move through the school. By time they leave at the end of Year 4, they have become enthusiastic and confident readers.
- Pupils achieve well in writing by the end of Year 4, but their handwriting skills are not always emphasised or developed to equally good effect in all parts of the school. At times, this restricts the pupils' confidence to write at greater length and more fluently, and reduces the impact of some otherwise highly expressive work.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in mathematics. This often accelerates when pupils are stimulated in their learning and apply themselves with increased vigour to the high level of challenges presented to them.
- The most able pupils, in particular, respond well when teachers raise their expectations and challenge pupils to think more deeply and share ideas. For example, pupils in Year 4 were seen enriching their understanding of mathematical terms by investigating different ways of solving real-life word-problems.
- Effective additional adult support ensures that all disadvantaged pupils make good and sometimes better progress than their peers. By the end of Year 4, apart from those who also have complex learning needs, most disadvantaged pupils attain as well as their classmates. Several exceed expected levels for their age.

This is equally the case in reading, writing and mathematics, where their attainment also exceeds that expected of pupils of the same age nationally.

- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported both in and out of classrooms. Skilled, thoroughly prepared adults help pupils to deal with a range of communication, language and emotional and behavioural challenges, and to learn well.

The early years provision

is good

- Most children enter the Reception classes with knowledge and skills that are lower than those typical for their age, especially in their personal, social and language development.
- Staff work well as a team to check children's developing skills and to plan activities that support their learning. All adults provide a high level of personal care for each child and cooperate very closely with parents. Staff also strive to make learning fun so that children look forward to coming to school. This was seen, for example, where children were enthusiastically paying attention to the story '*The Three Little Pigs*', and learning well as a result.
- Procedures to keep children safe are also implemented effectively. Children settle quickly and confidently into school life, and clearly feel safe as they move through the classrooms to access outdoor learning.
- Good leadership across the early years is focused with determination to bring continued improvement. For example, children have plentiful opportunities to learn well by using hand-held computers which also significantly enhance their enjoyment of school. Staff also use computers effectively to check and record children's developing skills.
- Children behave well and, guided by adults, develop highly positive relationships. Children respond well to the wide range of stimulating activities and become keen and cooperative learners. For example, they enthusiastically made friendships and planned for shared play-time activities as they busily 'tidied-up' equipment after use.
- All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well within the three Reception classes and across all areas of learning. This is evident in the above average proportion of children reaching a good level of development. This also shows that children are well prepared for future learning by the time they start Year 1.
- Teaching in the early years is good. At times, teaching has an excellent impact on children's learning. For example, a group of the most able children greatly extended their understanding of how to use scales correctly in response to the teacher's challenging questions.
- Good teaching and lots of talk and focused questioning help children make good progress in developing their speaking and early writing skills. The early years provision is not outstanding because at times, opportunities to encourage and extend these skills more during the children's self-chosen learning activities are not always taken.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113791
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	453166

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	401
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miles King
Headteacher	Melanie Cridland
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 June 2009
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