

Manor Croft Academy

Old Bank Road, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire WF12 7DW

Inspection dates

13–14 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal and his senior leadership team have an uncompromising ambition for the school. Their strong leadership has led to better teaching, much improved behaviour and higher achievement for pupils.
- Staff share the leaders' vision and are justifiably proud of the improvements they have seen in their school.
- Leaders continue to take effective action to eradicate weaker teaching and increase the proportion of good or better teaching. As a result, teaching is good overall and the progress made by pupils has accelerated rapidly over the last year.
- The school's new system to promote good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning is effective. Behaviour both in lessons and around school is good. Pupils treat each other and adults with respect. The stricter code of conduct led initially to an increase in exclusions. Leaders accept that, although now reducing, the number of exclusions remains too high.
- Governors have the right expertise and skills to provide robust challenge to senior leaders.
- Delta Academies Trust has provided highly effective support and further professional challenge for leaders. Staff have developed very fruitful links with trust staff and other trust schools.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff receive appropriate training and pupils feel safe. Pupils know who to go to if problems arise and have confidence that staff will help them to resolve any issues.
- Support for pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective and they make good progress. Leaders are aware that the number of pupils of Eastern European origin is increasing and they need to ensure that appropriate support is available.
- Middle leaders are highly ambitious for their pupils. They use progress data effectively to pinpoint underachievement and put into place effective support to ensure that pupils do not fall behind.
- Leaders see homework as central to ensuring that all pupils make good progress. Leaders are aware that there is more work to do to ensure that homework supports pupils' progress.
- Leaders have focused successfully on numeracy. There has been a similar focus on literacy. However, leaders know that there is still work to do to improve the literacy skills of some pupils.
- Pupils now make good progress across the curriculum. However, leaders are aware that progress is slower in history and French and pupils make less progress in key stage 3.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' behaviour further so that the number of exclusions reduces rapidly to below the national average.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - consolidating the work on homework so that pupils develop the skills to work independently outside lessons
 - developing the school's work on literacy, so that pupils have techniques to use when they face difficulties in reading and writing
 - ensuring that all teaching comes up to the standard of the very best teaching now evident in school.
- Improve outcomes further by ensuring that:
 - the plans in place to secure more rapid progress in history and French are successful
 - departments continue to focus on key stage 3, so that pupils in Years 7 and 8 make as rapid progress as they do in key stage 4.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The new principal and his leadership team have taken decisive action to strengthen the quality of teaching and learning and to improve pupils' outcomes and behaviour. This action has led to exceptionally rapid improvement. Particularly impressive is the way leaders ensure that the whole school community is in full support of their actions.
- Leaders meet and greet pupils at the school gate and can be seen regularly throughout the day both in classrooms and about the campus. As a result, they know their pupils well and have an accurate view of what is working well in the school and where improvements are necessary. Their plans for development focus well on the most important priorities and the targets they set are clearly measurable.
- The trust provides highly effective support and challenge to the school. Middle leaders value the work they do with specialist directors. The chief executive and other trust staff add an additional, extremely rigorous, layer of challenge for school leaders with very regular analysis of pupils' progress. School leaders acknowledge the part this played in the much improved 2017 results.
- Outstanding leadership at all levels is at the heart of this school's recent success. The headteacher is very ably supported by an extremely strong team of senior leaders. Middle leaders are an emerging strength of the school. Like senior leaders, they are ambitious for their pupils and show no complacency. As a result, teachers in their departments encourage their pupils to aim high. This has had a positive impact on pupils' progress. Middle leaders are proud of the school's success, but determined to make further improvements. They use progress data effectively to pinpoint underachievement in each year group and put into place appropriate support to prevent pupils from falling behind.
- Leaders and managers use a range of evidence to determine the quality of teaching and learning and the progress that pupils are making. These include lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and rigorous analysis of pupils' progress information. Systems are in place for checking the performance of teachers and identifying areas that require strengthening. This has led to rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- The principal and his senior team have achieved something very special in the level of support they have from the staff and how positive teachers feel about the culture of the school. Staff morale is high. The responses to the staff questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about changes in the school, particularly over the last year. They are proud of their school and feel valued.
- Leaders use all of the additional funding they receive to good effect. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Inspectors saw at first-hand how catch-up funding is helping Year 7 pupils whose literacy and numeracy skills are not at the level required for secondary education to improve those skills. The rapid improvement in both the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and the academic progress they make is testimony to how well leaders use pupil premium funding.

- Leaders organise spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well. Pupils receive this education in form time, assemblies and across different subjects. Enrichment days give pupils further opportunities to develop this aspect of their education. Leaders ensure that the school prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils show tolerance and respect. The pupils in the school come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds with a variety of languages and the harmonious atmosphere in the school is testimony to this work.
- The revised curriculum has a clear rationale. After the 2016 examination results, leaders identified the urgent need to increase curriculum time for core subjects. The positive impact of these changes is clear both in the provisional examination results for 2017 and in the progress of current pupils in English, mathematics and science. Leaders are constantly reviewing the impact of the curriculum and they make changes where appropriate. Staff offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Some are subject based, offering pupils the chance to supplement their learning. Others give pupils opportunities to take part in sport or other activities such as drama or the visual arts. Pupils take up these opportunities and attend well.
- There is a clear plan of how form time is to be used to develop numeracy and literacy. During the inspection, inspectors observed form tutors delivering the numeracy element. Tutors, well briefed during the weekly staff training, handled the material confidently and the pupils participated enthusiastically.
- Leaders can explain very clearly why the number of fixed-term exclusions was higher than the national average in 2016. However, they agree that more actions are required to reduce the number of exclusions further.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very ambitious for the pupils and staff. They have effective systems in place, including frequent visits to school to check on progress and to ensure that the school is improving. As a consequence, they know their school well and have a very clear handle on the overall effectiveness of the school and where further improvements are necessary.
- Governors are highly skilled and have the necessary expertise to support their work. They talk with confidence about how the school has improved since the 2016 examination results and can clearly explain the reasons for the improvement. They speak with equal assurance about the next steps for further improvement.
- An analysis of governors' minutes and conversations with governors show that they provide real challenge and support for the leaders of the school. They are not afraid to challenge and their questioning of school leaders about all matters of school life is extremely rigorous. Leaders welcome this and the part it has played in the rapid improvement over the last year.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Staff and governors are very clear about their responsibility to keep children safe and fulfil their safeguarding duties. The link governor for safeguarding meets frequently with leaders, and governors review the school's processes regularly to check that systems are fit for purpose.
- There is a clear ethos about the school that sets the safety of pupils as a high priority. Staff are vigilant and leaders work closely with external agencies in the community to ensure that appropriate action is taken to keep the most vulnerable pupils safe. The fact that school staff and leaders know their pupils so well is central to this process.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep safe and assess the risks which might face them. The school engages well with external agencies to provide comprehensive advice on a range of issues which might be a risk to pupils' well-being.
- Leaders have robustly tackled pupils' absence and are tenacious in chasing up non-attendance. As a result, the much improved attendance is contributing well to pupils' safety and well-being.
- The school's approach is best summed up by saying that no stone is left unturned to ensure that children are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have a major focus on learning and teaching and show great determination to improve the quality of teaching. Carefully targeted professional development has had a real impact and teachers respond well to it. In many responses to the staff questionnaire, teachers talk of how they have valued the opportunities to improve their skills. As a result of this better teaching, the progress pupils make has accelerated rapidly.
- Teachers and leaders are quick to point out the importance of the much improved behaviour and attitudes of pupils. Positive relationships and mutual respect feature strongly in the school. Teachers have purposeful classroom routines which pupils follow without question and this enables lessons to progress smoothly and without interruption.
- Leaders have focused successfully on improving the quality of teaching in mathematics and new leadership of the subject is having a positive impact. This has led to a rapid improvement in the progress pupils make in mathematics. Since the previous inspection, leaders have also strengthened the quality of teaching in science.
- There is a clear strategy to encourage pupils to read more widely. There are assemblies to raise the profile and time is allocated in form time specifically for quiet reading. As a result, most pupils are reading a book for pleasure and are able to explain why they have chosen that book.
- Leaders have established a system where lessons start with individualised questions based on any misconceptions from the previous lesson. These questions vary in difficulty and provide not only support for those who found the work difficult, but also real challenge for the most able.
- Leaders have put a real emphasis on knowledge-based homework. At home pupils have the time to reflect on material covered in class and are tested regularly on their

understanding. However, the policy is in its infancy and leaders accept that the idea of independent study outside lessons needs further consolidation.

- Leaders are aware that their work on developing literacy across the curriculum needs to continue. Similarly, they know that they need to continue their focus on key stage 3, so that pupils in Years 7 and 8 make as rapid progress as those in key stage 4.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils wear their uniform immaculately. They are proud of their school and the opportunities it provides for them. Pupils and their families value the support of their teachers and staff. They recognise and appreciate the rapid improvements brought about over the last year in school.
- Pupils receive comprehensive guidance on how to stay safe in school and within their community. Pupils have great confidence in the staff to deal with any issues that they take to them.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about the different types of bullying and speak highly of the effective way the school deals with any incidents of bullying. The curriculum for personal development has ensured that they do not tolerate racism or homophobia. Pupils are adamant that discrimination has no place in the school.
- Pupils receive effective careers education and guidance throughout the school and this is helping to raise the aspirations of pupils. The strong links with local business enhance this provision. As a result of strong guidance and much improved attainment, pupils from the school move on to appropriate further education, employment or training. Provisional information about those pupils who left the school at the end of 2017 show that very few pupils are not in employment, education or training. With the much improved examination results, a greater proportion of pupils have moved into higher level further education courses.
- Nine pupils attend alternative provision off the school site. Leaders ensure that safeguarding procedures are just as rigorous as the school's own procedures in all four institutions. School staff keep in regular contact with the providers and check regularly both on pupils' welfare and academic progress. Pupils attending alternative provision make good progress.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff and pupils agree that behaviour has improved significantly since the introduction of the new behaviour system. Teachers use rewards and sanctions effectively and pupils have responded well to the approach.

- Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. During the inspection they responded willingly to inspectors' questions and were clearly proud of their school and the way it has improved.
- A visible presence of staff about the school is central to the philosophy of the school leaders and pupils respond well to that. Pupils' conduct around the school is good and the atmosphere is calm and purposeful. The conversations which take place, on corridors as pupils move between lessons, show the strength of relationships between pupils and their teachers.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good and this has undoubtedly made a significant contribution to the improvements in the pace of learning over the last year. Pupils also show an increasing pride in the way they present their work.
- Leaders clearly recognise the negative impact that poor attendance can have on pupils' learning. They now have in place highly effective, rigorous systems to monitor and improve attendance. As a result, attendance for all groups of pupils has improved significantly and is now in line with the national average. The improvement in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has undoubtedly made a sizeable contribution to their much improved attainment.
- Conversations during the inspection and responses to the formal Ofsted questionnaires show without question that staff and parents believe that behaviour is good.
- There was a rise in the number of exclusions as a result of the introduction of the stricter code of behaviour. The number has started to reduce, but leaders accept that the number of students who are excluded is still too high.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Achievement across the school has improved significantly over the last year as a result of good teaching. After a disappointing set of GCSE results in 2016, leaders made this a priority and their tracking of pupils' progress is very rigorous. As a result, 2017 results saw a vast improvement on 2016 and current pupils are making good progress overall. This is supported by work seen in pupils' books.
- As a result of improved leadership and teaching, GCSE outcomes in English, mathematics, science and geography have improved. Across different subjects, pupils currently make strong progress.
- Mathematics was a real concern to leaders in 2016. However, the arrival of a new subject leader and a relentless focus on the subject by senior leaders has brought about a transformation. From a very low base in 2016, outcomes in 2017 moved up to be broadly in line with the national average. For a cohort of pupils who arrived in the school with key stage 2 scores significantly below national averages, this marks real progress. Scrutiny of present Year 11 pupils' books and their scores in formal school tests shows they are in a stronger position than the 2017 cohort at the same stage.
- Attainment is improving further as a result of improved teaching and higher teacher expectations. More is now expected of pupils in terms of the progress they are making. Scrutiny of pupils' work, from this year and last, shows that pupils' progress is improving across the year groups and that pupils are responding well to teachers'

questions and advice. A strong emphasis is placed on the quality and presentation of work produced by pupils, and the quality of their work is good.

- The progress of disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 improved significantly in 2017. Leaders and teachers have a clear focus on this group of pupils and this is communicated effectively across the school. With current pupils there is no noticeable difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of their non-disadvantaged peers.
- Pupils work hard and want to do well in their subjects. As a result, very little learning time is lost. It is clear that teachers have higher expectations of pupils now than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making progress that is as good as others nationally with the same starting points. These pupils are very well supported by staff who are well trained and who focus on individual pupils' needs. Careful consideration is given to identify individual pupils' needs, to allow tailored support. This then leads to further progress.
- Senior leaders and the middle leaders of both French and history accept that pupils are presently not making the rapid progress in these subjects seen in other subject areas. Senior leaders have a detailed plan in place and are confident that they can bring about the same improvements in those areas as have been seen in science and mathematics.
- Leaders are aware that pupils do make good progress in key stage 3, but it is not as strong as the progress pupils make in key stage 4. Leaders have plans in place to address this issue.
- As a result of improved outcomes in examinations, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education or future employment.

School details

Unique reference number	139076
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10036560

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	638
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Kath Turner
Principal	Andy Barnett
Telephone number	01924 325230
Website	www.manorcroft.org.uk
Email address	info@manorcroft.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	July 7–8 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is a smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational need or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The school is part of Delta Academies Trust.
- Pupil numbers have increased since the previous inspection.
- The school uses four alternative providers for a total of nine pupils. The providers are Westfields, Brian Jackson College, The Elland Academy, and Ethos.
- The current principal was appointed in September 2016. There have also been a number of new appointments and staff changes, including some at senior leadership level.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in parts of lessons, with three sessions jointly observed with senior leaders. They also conducted scrutiny of pupils' work jointly with middle leaders. Inspectors also observed form time and an assembly.
- Throughout the two days of the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils, both informally and formally, about their learning and safety.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading. They reviewed pupils' work in lessons and scrutinised samples of work in pupils' books.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with three governors and with the chief executive as a representative of Delta Academies Trust. Inspectors also held meetings with senior and middle leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors reviewed leaders' evaluations of the performance of the school, the school improvement plan and minutes of governing body meetings. They considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors analysed the 47 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and the 25 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

David Pridding, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Wendy Bradford	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Garrett	Ofsted Inspector
Marianne Young	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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