

Spotland Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105776
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	377294
Inspection dates	11–12 January 2012
Lead inspector	Steve Isherwood HMI

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	407
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Greg Couzens
Headteacher	Suzanne Cassidy
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Mr S Isherwood
Mr S Lord
Mr C Griffin

Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 19 teachers teaching 19 lessons and parts of lessons. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence including: the school improvement plan; the tracking of pupils' progress; monitoring reports; the work pupils were doing in their books; and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to aid inspection planning. The inspectors analysed 161 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and took account of those completed by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This is larger than the average sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage from Pakistani backgrounds. The number of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English is high. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average, as is the number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and those with disabilities. An above average number of pupils leave or join the school other than at the start of the academic year. The school meets the current floor standard, whereby the government sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has gained a number of awards, including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Healthy School status and Investors in People status.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It has improved well over the last three years and has the capacity to be even better. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners. They feel very safe in school, have positive attitudes to their work and behave well. When asked to express their views on how they see things they found it very difficult to think of any improvements they would like to see. There was strong praise for staff, the high levels of care they receive and the wide range of opportunities on offer. Parents and carers echo these positive views and engage well with the school. 'I am very happy with the way my child is progressing.' and 'I would recommend this school to anyone' are just some of the comments that reflect their high regard.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 has risen to broadly average because increasing numbers of pupils are making good progress than at the time of the previous inspection. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress from their exceptionally low starting points. Attainment at Key Stage 1, although improving securely, remains low in reading, writing and mathematics. Not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels in their work.
- The proportion of good and outstanding lessons is growing but is not yet at a level that will raise pupils' attainment further. Lessons now typically see busy pupils responding with enthusiasm to a range of practical and stimulating activities. However, there is variability in how activities are planned for higher-ability pupils. Too often, tasks for these pupils are not demanding enough. They are restricted to composing a longer piece of writing or tackling a harder sum with insufficient attention given to how pupils might independently develop their thinking and comprehension skills.
- The headteacher and senior staff have successfully led improvement. They keep a close eye on the school's performance and are clear about the direction the school must take to secure its momentum and to make further

improvements. For example, they correctly recognise that maintaining the focus on improving teaching and learning is a key priority and is central to accelerating pupils' progress and raising their attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate the progress of pupils further, particularly at Key Stage 1 by:
 - maintaining the focus on improving teaching and learning and increasing the proportion of good and outstanding lessons
 - ensuring that more pupils reach the higher levels in their work
 - ensuring that teachers make effective use of assessment information to match work more closely for higher-ability pupils
 - ensure greater rigour in the planning of work to promote pupils' comprehension and independent thinking skills.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils develop a love of learning and are keen and motivated to succeed. They are attentive in class and engage enthusiastically with a wide range of experiences. They particularly enjoy activities that fire their imagination for learning where they can discuss and share their ideas with each other. Pupils in Year 6 developed an excellent understanding of how to write a journalistic text about the Apollo 13 disaster by working effectively together in pairs and small groups.

Pupils' current work and the test results from 2011, together with the school's own data, show that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 has risen to broadly average over the last two years. The progress pupils make from their low starting points has improved and is now good. A notable success is that the proportion of pupils making expected levels of progress in English and mathematics is now above the national average, reflecting the upward trend in the school's performance. Parents and carers quite rightly have recognised this improvement in pupils' progress. One parent's view was typical of many: 'My child is now learning a lot at the school.'

When children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage what they know and can do varies, but overall their skills and abilities are exceptionally well below those typical for their age, particularly in language and communication. The good provision ensures they settle quickly and enables them to make great strides in their learning. By the time they enter Year 1, although still below the levels expected for their age, children have made good progress from their starting points. Work in lessons and in their books shows that pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with disabilities and those learning English as an additional language, make good progress as they move through the school to Year 6. All pupils acquire good skills in reading relative to their starting points as a result of a successful whole-

school focus to accelerate the progress made in developing skills of literacy and communication. Although attainment at the end of Year 2 is currently low in reading, writing and mathematics there is clear evidence to suggest that pupils are now making better progress than previously in Years 1 and 2, particularly in reading fluently, and that attainment is rising. This is largely because improvements in teaching and learning are increasing the progress pupils make in lessons. However, across the school, not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels in their work. This is because of inconsistencies in how work is planned for higher-ability pupils. This means that some of these pupils do not always achieve as well or as rapidly as they should.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching has improved and impacts strongly on pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to their learning. Teachers have improved their understanding of what constitutes effective practice through well-targeted training and support and have established a clear vision for learning. As a result, a number of common strengths are emerging in the more successful lessons. Positive relationships between teachers and pupils are fully established. Teaching assistants provide an effective layer of extra support, particularly for those pupils who find learning difficult. New skills build well on prior learning. Teachers are skilled in developing pupils' thinking through effective questioning which keeps pupils on their toes. Staff are effective in knowing when to intervene and how to interact with pupils to enhance their learning. For example, they develop pupils' language well through effective questioning and commentary while working alongside them. The use of success criteria is improving pupils' understanding of what they are learning in lessons. Pupils have regular opportunities to discuss and share their ideas with their peers and to check each other's understanding. Pupils are supported effectively in knowing how to improve their work through effective comments from teachers in their books, although it is not always clear how these comments are followed up with pupils.

When the planning and teaching are at their best, the impact on pupils' progress is significant, as when a small group of pupils in Year 6 were developing their ability to speak and write in the style of a journalist. With skilful prompting from the class teacher, pupils acted out scenes in role play and made excellent progress in their speaking and listening by taking on the role of a television reporter responding to a story about a group of aliens landing in Washington DC. This lesson confirmed how well the pupils can do when expectations are high and the teaching is imaginative. Where teaching is less strong, tasks for higher-ability pupils across the curriculum lack pace and challenge, which restricts their ability to work independently and use their thinking and comprehension skills. In addition, in some lessons there is a lack of precision in teachers' planning, especially with regard to the work set for higher-attainers.

The school has taken effective steps to improve the teaching of reading in all classes. As a consequence, pupils generally read fluently and enjoy talking about the author, illustrator and content of their books. Young readers talk about spelling patterns in words with increasing awareness and accuracy. Pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities make good progress in reading because interventions are

well taught. The introduction of a systematic phonics and decoding scheme is leading to pupils' greater confidence in tackling unfamiliar words, although their comprehension skills are less well developed. Parents and carers report how pleased they are with their children's progress in reading and understandably they feel that the overall quality of teaching is good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils enjoy attending and feel very safe because the atmosphere in school is calm and well ordered. Their typical behaviour is good in lessons and around the building. They consistently show tolerance towards others and are maturing into thoughtful and caring young people with clear values of honesty and respect. Relationships are very positive. Pupils are proud of their school, develop a strong social conscience and are eager to take on extra responsibilities, such as acting as playground pals, team captains or members of the active school council.

Instances of all kinds of bullying are rare, and pupils and most parents and carers are confident that staff will listen and act on their concerns should problems arise. Pupils commented, 'If we have any problems, teachers sort it.' Pupils are very well supported in their emotional development and are encouraged to talk through their feelings through regular circle-time sessions, worry boxes and through the effective use of the 'Bubble Room'. A large majority of parents and carers say that the school manages behaviour well, although a few felt otherwise.

Leadership and management

The continued success of the school since its last inspection is underpinned by the drive and determination of the headteacher to see the school improve further. Her ambition and clear educational direction has had a significant impact on raising pupils' achievement and in improving the quality of their learning. With the good support from senior and middle leaders, including members of the governing body, she is leading the school down the right path. Expectations have been raised and there is clear agreement on the strengths in provision and where further improvements can be made. Although further work is required, effective action has been taken to raise the achievement of pupils and to close the gap between attainment at the school and the national average. As a consequence, the school's commitment to equality of opportunity is strong and the school is effective in improving pupils' life chances and in tackling discrimination.

The impact of the curriculum on pupils' outcomes is good and improving. Careful attention is given to the development of key skills and using information and communication technology alongside plans to inject more creativity into activities over the coming year. All pupils benefit from good enrichment opportunities and a wide choice of extra-curricular activities, including gardening, pottery and cycling clubs. Pupils confirm these activities add considerable enjoyment to their learning and their positive attitudes.

The governing body plays an effective role in shaping the school's direction and in holding it to account. Members are committed and are increasingly confident in

challenging and supporting the school to improve further. They are well informed and are involved in planning for improvement and in evaluating the school's performance.

The school has good safeguarding arrangements. No stone is left unturned to ensure that all pupils, including those most vulnerable are well cared and looked after. Staff are vigilant in identifying and responding to any potential dangers that pupils may encounter. All staff have been vetted and are trained appropriately in child-protection procedures.

Considering the good improvements made since its last inspection and along with its other strengths, including the rigorous analysis of pupils' progress and the effective networking with a cluster of local schools, the school is well placed to continue to improve.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



13 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Spotland Primary School, Rochdale OL12 6QG

Thank you so much for helping the inspectors during our visit. We really enjoyed chatting to you in lessons, in the pupil interviews and when we listened to some of you read. You told us how rightly proud you are of your school. We read the many comments made by your parents and carers. The vast majority were very complimentary about the school. Please thank them for taking the time to write to us.

You go to a good school that has improved since its last inspection. You are now making good progress in your work because your lessons are getting better. We were very pleased to see your good behaviour and how well you help each other.

You told us that your lessons are increasingly interesting and often fun. We saw this when Year 1 children were having a pretend sleep-over in their den, when Year 2 learned about Dinosaurs and when some of the boys and girls in the Nursery class talked about their shopping lists. I was also impressed when Year 6 pupils showed me their learning logs. What a great way to keep track of your progress and to look back on all your work. I enjoyed your rewards assembly and seeing all the certificates being presented. I really loved your singing, particularly the song called 'Fabby Dabby Do'. Well done also to the yellow team for winning the trophy.

Your teachers are working effectively to improve the school. We have asked whether you can make faster progress and for some of you to have harder work to improve your thinking and comprehension. We have also asked whether more of your lessons could be like the very best ones we saw when you were very involved in working on your own and making your own decisions about how you learn. You can help by telling your teachers what makes your lessons interesting and what helps you to learn.

Yours sincerely

Steve Isherwood
Her Majesty's Inspector

