

Rushcroft Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105659
Local Authority	Oldham
Inspection number	355813
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2010
Reporting inspector	John Heap

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Benjamin Atkins
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Sheridan
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twelve lessons were observed and seven teachers seen. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at improvement plans, attendance and finance data, the tracking of pupils' achievements, and monitoring documents from the local authority. The number of questionnaires received from parents and carers amounted to 137.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Achievement in English at both key stages to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging, particularly for the highest attaining pupils.
- Outcomes and children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage to determine the effectiveness of this provision.
- Whether the various groups in school are making enough progress.
- The extent to which pupils use and develop their basic skills in other subjects.
- The preciseness of the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures.

Information about the school

This smaller than average primary school serves a mainly White British population and has a very small group of pupils from other ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is broadly average. A little above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has gained a range of awards including Healthy School status, accreditation for ActiveMark and the ECO Green Flag award.

The range of extended provision includes before- and after-school childcare run by the governing body and family learning.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school that provides sound value for money. The strengths of this caring school include: outcomes and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage; the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities; several aspects of pupils' personal development; the strong safeguarding procedures and practices; the good quality before- and after-school clubs; and the effective links made with parents and carers and with educational partners. Parents, carers and pupils fully appreciate the work of the school and a typical parental view is, Rushcroft is a very caring community.'

Achievement is satisfactory. On entry to Reception, children's skills are broadly typical for their age, although this can change year by year. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is average and pupils have made satisfactory progress. There have been fluctuations in national test results with instances of higher and lower standards of attainment. Reading and mathematics outcomes are stronger than writing, both at the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5. The main reasons for this are too few opportunities to write extended pieces and particularly in other subjects, inconsistency in the use of assessment information to plan activities and the inconsistent marking of writing. For example, marking does not provide pupils with enough information about the quality of their work in relation to their targets or give a clear enough picture of what they need to do to improve.

Pupils demonstrate good behaviour and strong attitudes to learning. However, they do not experience enough good lessons. This is because the levels of challenge and pace are inconsistent; consequently pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress. However, the teaching is strong in Reception and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Moreover, the teaching of instrumental music is excellent, with pupils reaching high levels of achievement in playing brass instruments.

Self-evaluation judgements are generous, but this is partially explained by the improvements made since the last inspection and a better profile of results in national tests. Nevertheless, leaders and managers have correctly identified the school's main strengths and priorities. Consequently, the capacity to improve is satisfactory. However, the pace of improvement following self-evaluation is slowed by a lack of rigour in monitoring, evaluation and action planning. Subject leaders and members of the governing body do not have enough independent opportunities to monitor their areas of responsibility.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment and progress in writing by:
 - using assessment information more rigorously and consistently to identify the learning needs of individuals

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- increasing the amount of writing done by all pupils
- providing more opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects
- ensuring that marking provides pupils with a clear picture of their achievements and what they need to do to improve further.
- Increase the proportion of good lessons being taught by:
 - ensuring that lessons have a brisk pace and high expectations
 - being certain that all pupils, regardless of ability, are challenged by the content and planned outcomes of the lesson
 - eliminating the inconsistencies in the quality of planning, assessment and marking.
- Make monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning more rigorous by:
 - reducing the amount of informal monitoring and replacing it with highly focused and well planned checks, particularly in teaching and learning
 - ensuring that the criteria for success in plans are robust and measurable
 - supporting the governors to be more independent in the way they check on provision and outcomes.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In most classes, pupils are well motivated, keen to learn and concentrate for long periods of time. They collaborate well with each other and show a thirst for learning. These strengths were observed even in lessons that lacked interest and good planning.

Standards of attainment are average and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils do best in reading and mathematics and writing standards are improving. Extra provision in writing is helping with pupils' knowledge and understanding but the quality of written work remains variable. The school has rightly focused strongly on improving the quality of pupils' written work.

The tracking of pupils' achievements shows that progress is uneven over time; however, it shows pupils' stronger achievement in Years 5 and 6. The small groups of pupils from minority ethnic and other backgrounds also make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get effective support and make good progress towards their goals. The preparation for their future learning is satisfactory.

Pupils benefit from the good and caring ethos and the strong parts of the otherwise satisfactory curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In particular, they demonstrate very strong moral and social development and this leads to good behaviour and effective attitudes to school and work. Pupils show a good knowledge and understanding of how to lead healthy and safe lifestyles and the school's work in these areas has brought it awards. The good work of the before- and after-school clubs also fosters pupils' skills and their obvious enjoyment of school. Pupils make a good contribution to school and local life through their good links with the community, the work

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of the school council and the way they carry out day-to-day responsibilities, such as playground 'buddies'.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

In the best lessons, teaching is well organised; lessons are well planned and resources are used effectively to reinforce and strengthen learning. Most teachers manage lessons well and there are few disruptions to learning. However, there is inconsistent use of assessment information to direct pupils' learning. For example, in a few classes pupils' targets for improvement and marking are closely linked. Consequently, pupils have a clear picture of their achievements and what they need to do to improve and this results in them making consistently better progress. However, in other classes there are missed opportunities to challenge more-able pupils because the match of work to pupils' individual needs is not always precise enough.

The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils' social and emotional well-being is enhanced well by the teaching and learning opportunities fostered by, for instance, nurture groups and through the personal, social and health education programme. For example, a good Year 5 lesson helped pupils to a better understanding of bereavement. Moreover, there are very helpful contributions from external providers, most particularly in relation to safety education and music. In fact, performing arts make a good contribution to the quality of the curriculum, particularly in

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music. The curriculum is well adapted for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The curriculum plays a satisfactory part in pupils' academic development. The use and development of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other subjects is weak. In particular, pupils do not do enough writing and there are too few opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects. The quality of topic work across the school is inconsistent.

Parents and carers are rightly very satisfied with the way in which staff are vigilant in ensuring pupils' welfare, including the work of those who run the before- and after-school clubs. Older pupils assist the staff very well in caring for and supporting the younger ones at playtime. Support and guidance make a significant contribution to the personal development of all groups of pupils and their parents, such as the support given to those pupils with severe learning difficulties. Pupils say that when they need help there is always someone to turn to. The monitoring of attendance and behaviour is robust and ensures that pupils, and their parents and carers, are aware of their responsibilities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides the school with a clear vision and the pace of improvement is satisfactory. Good leadership has succeeded in improving both the outcomes and provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Safeguarding of pupils includes good levels of security and the robust checking of staff, and strong links with local services ensure that pupils' understanding of safety issues are up-to-date.

There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. For example, the school's approach to monitoring pupils' achievements is better than it was and, consequently, there has been an upward trend in academic results. Nevertheless, there are areas that require further improvement such as: more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning; ensuring that pupils receive consistent guidance from the marking of their work and increasing the impact of improvement planning by ensuring that success criteria are truly challenging and measurable. Although priorities in the school improvement plan are accurately identified, the measures of success are not sharp enough because they do not indicate the expected impact on the outcomes for all pupils. Consequently, it is more difficult for leaders and managers to check rates of progress, particularly the subject leaders.

The school promotes equal opportunity satisfactorily, as in the sound improvements made to the way that the achievements of small groups are checked, analysed and acted upon. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and there was no evidence of it taking place.

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Although the satisfactory governing body receives increasing amounts of information, it correctly recognises the need to develop independent procedures to better evaluate the work of the school. The management of the before- and after-school clubs is effective. Financial management is prudent and effective and benefits from the good work of the business manager. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory with the strongest work being done about the locality.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get a good start in the Reception class because the teaching is good and they are well looked after. As a result, they make strong progress in their learning. Children settle quickly, show good levels of motivation and choose tasks independently and with confidence. They build effective relationships with the very caring adults and the other children and, consequently, their play is full of excitement and curiosity. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of how these young children learn and develop. Activities are well-planned and closely matched to the needs of all learners, helped by on-going assessments which are sensitive and accurate. Lessons are well planned, challenging and have a good pace. This was seen in a short session about the letter 'j', where there was a mix of flashcard, action, song and children demonstrating the sound. All children wanted to make a contribution and did so, either in speech or by 'writing' the letter with their finger on the back of another child. However, there was major excitement when the teacher introduced her 'secret' bag of resources, all beginning with the letter 'j'.

The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has only been in post since September 2010. She is highly committed to making further improvements. As some monitoring and evaluation procedures are at an early stage of development, it is too soon for a judgement of more than satisfactory for leadership and management.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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	3

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers were supportive of the work done by the school and how well this impacts on their children. In particular, parents and carers praised the approachability of staff; the very strong support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities; the after-school club and the school's high expectations about pupils showing respect and good manners. Just a very small number of the returns had negative comments, mainly about pupils' behaviour. The inspection team held lengthy discussions with staff and groups of pupils and the feedback during the inspection did not indicate this to be an issue.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rushcroft 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 137 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	105	77	31	23	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	109	80	25	18	2	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	91	66	43	31	2	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	102	74	32	23	2	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	101	74	34	25	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	96	70	39	28	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	96	70	40	29	1	1	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)	86	63	43	31	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	98	72	36	26	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	94	69	34	25	4	3	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	85	62	43	31	2	1	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	94	69	36	26	4	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	107	78	26	19	4	3	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 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rushcroft Primary School, Oldham, OL2 7YL

On behalf of the team, can I thank you for your warm welcome, courtesy and help.

We thoroughly enjoyed the couple of days we spent in your school. It is not easy to cover all the points in a short letter, but here are some of the main findings we found about your satisfactory school.

This is what we really liked about your school.

- The good progress and teaching in Reception.
- The good progress made by pupils who need additional help.
- Your good attitudes to learning, behaviour and the strong relationships you develop with each other and the adults who work with you in school.
- The good contribution you make to the day-to-day running of the school and to special projects such as fundraising.
- Your enjoyment of school and the way this is appreciated by parents.
- Your good knowledge and understanding of healthy and safe lifestyles.
- The way the school keeps you safe, including those who attend the before- and after-school clubs.
- The school's strong approach to working closely with your parents and others who help you, such as the music teacher who comes in to teach every week.

To help your school improve further, your teachers will help you to improve your writing. I know that you will want to assist in this by always doing your best work, acting on the guidance given and reaching the challenging targets set for you. We have also asked that more of the teaching and assessment of your work is raised to a good standard. The staff and governors will work even harder to check what is going on in the school.

The inspection team wishes you well and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Heap

Lead inspector

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