

# Meanwood Community Nursery and Primary School

Churchill Street, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL12 7DJ

**Inspection dates** 17–18 September 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires Improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires Improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires Improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires Improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires Improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement is not yet good because progress over time has been inconsistent and so higher attainment is not yet sustained.
- Pupils' attendance is not high enough.
- Although teaching is much improved, it is not yet consistently good or better across the school. In the weaker lessons, pupils are not challenged to their full capabilities.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not make enough progress in literacy and mathematics through play activities, particularly in the outdoor area.
- In some lessons, pupils' behaviour requires improvement to make sure they make a prompt start and work hard throughout their lessons.
- The governing body does not have sufficient knowledge and expertise about school to challenge the leadership strongly enough.
- Middle leaders, some of whom are newly appointed, have not fully established their leadership responsibilities and so they are not yet contributing fully to raising standards.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are a strong, ambitious team and have driven improvements effectively from a very low starting point.
- There has been a marked improvement in pupils' behaviour over time. The whole school community recognises this.
- Pupils enjoy coming to Meanwood; they feel safe and cared for with the very positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils.
- The best lessons help pupils to make good progress with exciting, carefully planned activities that promote good learning for all groups.
- Rigorous monitoring by senior leaders is accurately identifying areas for improvement and the accurate tracking of pupils' progress is helping to raise achievement and improve teaching.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 21 lessons. One lesson was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other staff, a representative from the local authority, governors and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 21 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also to the staff questionnaire responses. Inspectors also took account of the comments from parents on the playground at the start and end of the school day.
- The inspectors examined school policies, information about pupils' attainment and progress, leaders' monitoring of teaching and the appraisal process, local authority evaluations of the school, teachers' plans, the limited amount of pupils' work which was available and the school's improvement plan.

## Inspection team

Barbara Flitcroft, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Deana Aldred

Additional Inspector

John Shutt

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school
- Most of the pupils are White British and there is an increasing proportion of pupils from other ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A well above average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals or those from service families.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school partway through their primary education is a little higher than average.
- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2012, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement and improve teaching so that it is at least consistently good by making sure that:
  - all adults always expect the best of pupils
  - teachers plan and deliver appropriate tasks at the right level of difficulty for individual pupils, particularly the more able
  - teachers use all opportunities to improve basic skills, especially writing, in other subjects
  - pupils have good opportunities to plan and organise their own learning and are not over-reliant on worksheets to record their work
  - children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are offered purposeful activities that promote learning, especially in literacy and mathematical skills, when they choose play activities, particularly in the outdoor area
  - no time is wasted in lessons by low-level disruptions or pupils not starting their work promptly.
- Improve attendance so it increases to at least the national average.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that middle leaders are sufficiently prepared to carry out their roles effectively
  - ensuring that governors have the confidence, skills and knowledge to hold the school leaders rigorously to account.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress is not consistent across the school. Pupils did not reach the standards they were capable of in some year groups and now, although progress for most matches that expected nationally, too few make good progress so as to achieve well.
- The Year 2 and Year 6 results in English and mathematics in 2011 and 2012 were well below the national average. Pupils had not made sufficient progress through the school. Inconsistencies in teaching caused by several changes in teaching staff contributed to this legacy of underachievement.
- The school has taken positive action to tackle this underachievement, and improvement can be seen. The results for Years 2 and 6 in the national tests at the end of 2013 are much improved and attainment in reading and mathematics is broadly in line with the national average with attainment in writing slightly lower. Although progress is good in some classes, it still requires some improvement because it is not yet consistently good across the school, particularly in writing.
- The school has made reading a high priority, not only amongst the pupils but with families too. The 'Reading Stars' process is competitive and pupils strive to read frequently at home to score rewards. This is having a very positive impact on standards in reading across the school.
- The progress of the pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is very similar to that of most other pupils. In relation to those pupils who attained expected or better standards in the 2013 tests, the school's tracking information shows that the proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding is only slightly lower than other pupils who attain these levels. The gap is closing between the attainment and achievement of the two groups.
- The individual progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is improving because activities and adult support are more effectively suited to their specific needs than previously. Consequently, their attainment is broadly in line with the national average for this group.
- The more-able pupils are making expected progress and some are exceeding this. In some lessons, pupils are set suitably challenging tasks but this is not the case in all classes.
- Children start in the Nursery with knowledge, understanding and skills below the levels typically expected for their age. About half of the children reach a good level of development by the end of Reception. Reading, writing, communication and mathematical development are the weakest areas. Children do not make enough progress because learning in literacy and mathematics is not promoted well enough when they choose play activities, especially outdoors.
- Despite improvements so far in teaching and progress in phonics (the letters and the sounds they make), the proportion of pupils achieving the Year 1 phonics screening check has remained almost the same as last year, slightly below the national average.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching has not been consistent enough since the last inspection to ensure that most pupils make good enough progress to reach average expectations for their age. Owing to effective monitoring by the senior leaders more teaching is now good and none is inadequate.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. Staff expectations have improved, but there are still too many occasions when adults are not expecting enough from the pupils. Activities and tasks have not been sufficiently well matched to pupils' abilities and needs. Leaders have identified this and helped staff to improve. However, in some lessons, tasks are still not sufficiently demanding for the more able. On occasions lesson plans are weak.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to learn independently through personal research in school. For example, pupils are sometimes required to answer narrow questions on a

worksheet instead of exploring the topic in more depth and deciding how to present their findings. However, a research method is successfully used for homework projects.

- The best teaching includes good questioning to explore pupils' knowledge and understanding, the use of 'talk partners' or 'think, pair, share' to help pupils to clarify their ideas before they speak in front of the class, activities that capture pupils' interest and imagination, and good use of visual aids. One lesson in Year 6 taught pupils how to write a descriptive setting for a story in a spooky forest. The teacher created an excellent climate for the pupils to imagine this by using spooky sounds over the audio system and creating some drama in the classroom by revealing pictures of different trees to stimulate their ideas for writing.
- Throughout the school, teachers and support staff establish strong relationships with the pupils. Teachers create a positive classroom climate for learning. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and most show consideration and respect for others. However, the school is not focussing its attention well enough on the required daily act of worship of a broadly Christian nature. These sessions are uninspiring. Pupils are often not given an opportunity for prayer or reflection and there are rare opportunities for singing or music.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They are usually well briefed by their class teachers and have a good knowledge of the pupils they are asked to support. However, in a few lessons they do not become fully involved until pupils start their independent work.
- In Nursery and Reception classes, there is a suitable balance for this time of year between adult-led activities and opportunities for children to explore their own learning. Although literacy and mathematics are taught well indoors, some of the activities, particularly in the outside area, which is shared between the two year groups, are not structured well enough to promote better progress.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good, but in some lessons, where the teacher does not insist on a sharp start to independent work, some pupils waste time. Occasionally, this leads to low-level disruption, which interrupts the flow of the lessons. Behaviour management requires improvement in some lessons to ensure that all pupils are able to maintain their concentration.
- Pupils are polite and well behaved around school when they know an adult is nearby. A small minority of children mess about when they think they are unsupervised. Pupils play well together in the playgrounds, particularly when they are able to use hoops, balls and other play equipment.
- Pupils behave well in the canteen and have friendly chats to their peers as they eat their healthy school lunches or their packed lunches.
- They feel safe at Meanwood and know how to keep themselves safe and how to make healthy choices about the food they eat and the things they do.
- Pupils know about different forms of bullying. Most pupils are happy at school and enjoy their learning and extra-curricular activities. They have trusting relationships with adults in school and are confident to speak to them about their worries. Almost all of the parents who responded to Parent View had a wholly positive view of the school and the pupils' behaviour.

### The leadership and management

### requires improvement

- The school leadership and management require improvement because leaders have faced a difficult period of change, particularly with regard to changes in staffing, that has delayed planned improvements. Middle leaders, for example, have not been able to make an impact because many are new to their roles and have not yet had sufficient training. New governors are not yet in a position to provide the necessary challenge to school leaders.
- Despite the school's best efforts, attendance is still in need of improvement. However, there has been a decrease in the number of persistent absentees and this is improving the progress of this

group of pupils.

- The headteacher, ably assisted by the deputy headteacher and with support from the local authority, has lifted this school from a position of very low attainment, teaching that was ill-matched to pupils' needs and poor standards of behaviour, which included racist and homophobic name-calling. Equality of opportunity is improving because the gaps between the achievement of different groups of pupils, such as those eligible for free school meals, and others in the school are narrowing or have disappeared.
- Leaders' efforts have resulted in significant improvement across all aspects of school. They have taken a hard line on raising standards as they set out their clear vision for the school's improvement. Some staff have left because of this; however, the majority of the school's present staff and governors agree with parents that the school is well led and managed. Standards are rising, as seen in the 2013 test results for Year 6. Behaviour has improved and pupils are now making better progress. All of the people who responded to Parent View would recommend this school to others.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have correctly identified priorities for improvement in the sharply focused school-improvement plan, although in some instances they judge the school's performance to be higher than it actually is at present. It is too soon to judge the full impact of all the improvements that have been made so far, but the school is certainly heading in the right direction to fulfil its aim that all pupils should reach their full potential.
- The school's system for tracking pupils' progress has been a major improvement led by the deputy headteacher. It enables pupils' progress to be assessed accurately and for staff to check on how well each individual, and all groups of pupils, are doing.
- The curriculum and class organisation have been successfully changed to a more pastoral system where pupils have their class teacher for most subjects. This has helped to develop a greater sense of accountability for pupils' progress with the teaching staff, and has provided opportunities for extending the development of English and mathematical skills to other curricular areas. Visits and visitors such as drama coaches, storytellers and other specialists enrich the curriculum. Staff and governors are keen to provide quality experiences. The Year 6 pupils were excited to be going on a residential trip during the inspection. New funding for sports is being used to develop physical skills in the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities.
- The quality of teaching is monitored effectively. Regular and frequent lesson observations together with half termly 'Closing the gap' meetings prompt clear suggestions for improvement and recognition of areas of strength. Staff training and their targets for improvement are correctly based on the priorities for school improvement. Strict decisions about staff promotion and salary increases are based on responsibilities, staff performance and pupils' progress.
- Communication with parents is good. School provides a weekly newsletter and has an informative website. Senior staff are on the playground at the start and end of the day. Parents find the school approachable and supportive. Several commented to inspectors about the good support provided as their children started school and in the older year groups too.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet current requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body receives regular reports from the headteacher and a minority of governors visit the school to assist with procedures such as the health and safety checking. The governing body is supportive but does not provide enough challenge for senior leaders.
  - Some governors are recently appointed and lacking in experience of school matters. However, a small group, including the Chair of Governors, have undertaken recent training opportunities provided by the local authority to improve their skills and knowledge.
  - Governors are well informed by the headteacher about how the pupil premium funding is making a difference to the achievement of the eligible pupils.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105773
<b>Local authority</b>	Rochdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	426092

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	412
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roger Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Su Halliday
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 September 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01706 648197
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