



# Cheetham CofE Community School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 105499  
**Local Authority** Manchester  
**Inspection number** 277365  
**Inspection dates** 15–16 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Sonja Oyen HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Halliwell Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Cheetham
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Manchester M8 9FR
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 7405996
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	411	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 7206737
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs M Upton
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr P Barnes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 October 2000		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Cheetham is a large primary school just to the north of the centre of Manchester. In 2004 the intake was increased to two classes for each year group and a new wing was added to house the Reception and Key Stage 1 classes. Fifty-nine children attend the Nursery full-time. Many children travel some distance to attend. Ninety-nine per cent of children are from ethnic minorities: the highest proportion is of Pakistani heritage. Only 7% of children have English as their first language. Ninety-six per cent of children are Muslim.

A significant number of children leave or join the school throughout the school year, often coming straight from abroad with limited or no English. Sixteen children have left the school since September and 21 children have joined. Two children are refugees/asylum seekers. Three children are in the care of the local authority. Forty-three per cent of children are eligible for free school meals, more than twice the national average. Eleven per cent of pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, predominantly moderate learning difficulties, and two children have a statement of special educational needs.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Cheetham is a good school with some outstanding features. It is special in being a school where children of different faiths and cultures mix happily and easily. It has built a well justified, strong reputation for its sensitivity to the myriad of heritages and values of the local, largely Muslim community. Parents want to send their children to Cheetham. Their high respect and regard for the headteacher and staff was evident in the 240 questionnaires returned and in parents' glowing comments to inspectors. The praise is well deserved. Cheetham is a happy, welcoming school where children thrive and make exceptional personal progress. Many make rapid progress in understanding and speaking English. With this comes increased confidence in trying new experiences, taking on responsibilities and having a say in how the school runs. Inspectors noted particularly the children's sense of what is right and proper in how to act towards others, their good manners, polite curiosity and keen sense of fun. They moved around school sensibly and ate healthily. All in all, the children showed themselves to be really good citizens in the making.

Central to the school's success is the passion, vision and drive of the headteacher. His strong leadership and view that every person matters are highly evident in the caring school community and in close links with parents, religious leaders and agencies here and abroad that enable the children to benefit from an extremely wide range of experiences, visitors and visits.

The school is now set fair after two years of unsettling change when academic standards fell. The school has successfully handled the influx of new children after the increase in school places. Cheetham has embraced them and they have embraced Cheetham's ways: respect for one another is tangible and the very low incidence of inappropriate behaviour is remarkable. The new building, refurbishment of other parts of school and development of the outdoor spaces, has provided excellent accommodation. This is particularly so for the Nursery and Reception year children who benefit from a good range of experiences inside and out. Good overall provision ensures these children settle quickly and get off to a good start.

The staff profile has also changed dramatically: the school currently has 10 teachers in their first or second year of teaching. They are receiving high quality support and guidance from the deputy headteacher and other senior managers and there is potential for the quality of teaching, satisfactory overall, to strengthen. At present the teachers are not getting the best out of the children, especially the more able. They often accept untidy work and fail to comment on how the content could be better. As a result, the children are not clear how they can help themselves to reach their targets. Although standards are below average the majority of the 7 and 11 year olds reach the level expected for their age. Given that most children start in the Nursery with very little expertise in speaking English, and often limited knowledge and skills, this represents good achievement over time. The weak spot is writing but the school has upped the focus on the teaching of writing, starting in the Nursery where children are having a go at writing their names. Additional support for children struggling in reading, and for those children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, has boosted their

reading, especially in how to work out new words. The teaching assistants play a key role in supporting the children often drawing on other languages to ensure that they have understood fully.

The headteacher and senior managers are working with much energy and commitment to improve the provision. They, and the governors, know in general terms what needs to be done but are less clear about what will count as success for the children. The absence in the school improvement plan of clear targets related to the children's performance makes it difficult for the governors to see how effective any action has been. That said, the systems put in place and the action taken so far this term have laid firm foundations and show that the school has good capacity to do more. Striking examples are the collation of information about children's attainment, the agreement of procedures to track each child's progress and the steps to tailor the curriculum more closely to the children's interests and the skills they need. Much is starting to come together that will enable the school to accelerate the rate of improvement.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Strengthen the quality of teaching and learning to accelerate children's progress, especially for the more able children.
- Be rigorous in marking children's work to give individuals an accurate picture of how well they are doing and what they need to do to get better.
- Sharpen the procedures to enable governors and senior staff to evaluate the work of the school and to link areas for improvement to clear outcomes for children.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Over time the children achieve well especially in their personal development and in using English. By the end of Year 6 the majority reach Level 4, as expected for 11 year olds. All get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception year. Many children have already made marked leaps in their ability to understand and speak English and to get on with others. The progress of the Reception year children so far points to most of them meeting or being close to the goals expected for their age when they start Year 1.

The school's results in the 2006 national tests showed a mixed picture. While there was an improvement in the Key Stage 2 test results, after a marked dip in 2005, the results were lower at Key Stage 1. Both dips reflected weaknesses in teaching and the underachievement of some children. The school is determined to raise standards and the targets for the current Year 6 are suitably challenging. There are positive signs that things are on the up: support programmes are helping Year 3 children to catch up, especially in reading, and many children are getting an extra push to develop their English. Achievement in writing is improving throughout the school, although there is scope to raise the stakes here and in mathematics, especially for the more able and the older children. Too many slips in spelling, instances of poor handwriting and misconceptions in mathematics have not been nipped in the bud.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

The school places high emphasis on raising the children's self-esteem and giving them the confidence to voice their opinions. As a result, children's personal development is outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also exceptionally strong. From starting in the Nursery, the children enjoy school very much: their attendance is good with few absences other than for religious and cultural reasons sanctioned by the school. They say they feel safe, secure and valued. Their enthusiasm and pride oozed out in their chatter about events, projects, the garden and all weather pitch. In lessons they showed a zest for learning rooted in their appreciation that, 'money doesn't just land in your lap - you have to go out and work'. They show a very high level of social responsibility and moral justice: the school council successfully arranged wider cultural representation and discussed openly and maturely the wearing of veils. The children's decision to donate the funds raised at the recent Eid party to a local hospice typifies their high level of concern for others. They show a good appreciation of what they need to stay healthy: they chose healthy snacks and lunches and showed willing, energetic participation in games and activities outside. The youngest children were not put off by the weather: they pedalled the bikes with gusto round the outdoor track and happily worked out on the balcony.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

While there is some good teaching, the inexperience in the teaching team shows in several ways and is the prime reason why the overall quality of the children's learning is presently only satisfactory. New members of staff have found their feet and already there is a good level of consistency in how classrooms are organised and how the children are managed. Throughout the school, teachers plan their lessons well and there were some insightful reviews. There were also many creative ideas to catch the children's interest such as the Year 1 scientists wearing safety goggles when looking round the school for sources of light. Teachers and support staff work well together. In the Nursery and Reception classes the adults skilfully used 'why' and 'how' questions to get the children talking about what they were doing. Working with groups of older children support staff successfully broke the task into small steps and repeated key words, sometimes translating into Urdu or Arabic to enhance understanding. At such times, learning was often good. However, some of the lessons did not challenge the children enough. Opportunities were missed to up the challenge for the more able or to discuss why some children were having problems in meeting the success criteria identified for the task. As a result, some children's learning was capped. Although there are good examples of helpful comments from teachers in the children's books, too many children are not being told or shown what to do to improve their performance.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The very good range of experiences in and out of lessons is a major force in the children's academic and personal progress. Recent changes to increase the focus on the development of skills promise to strengthen the quality further. A good step has been the selection of themes, such as the study of the Ottoman Empire by Year 6 children, to reflect the heritage of many of the children. Similarly, by asking the children what they want to learn more about, the school is tailoring the curriculum more to their needs and interests. It acceded to the request for separate sessions of physical education for the older boys and girls, including popular lunchtime classes in aerobics. Visits are well planned to enrich and enhance what is taught in class and local projects, such as visits to the Whitworth Art Gallery and the Museum of Science and Industry, provide beneficial avenues for children to learn through first hand experience. A similar high emphasis on learning through doing underlies the curriculum in the Nursery and Reception year and now into Year 1. The school is also making good use of additional programmes, including Talking Partners, to boost the fluency and literacy of children in the early stages of learning English. During their time at school, the children take part in a super array of activities and meet people from many walks of life. This fosters well their development as well rounded members of a multicultural and multi-faith community.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

All the staff show a high level of care and concern for the children. They want them to do well and understand that some may have difficulty coping with school, especially when they first arrive. Time spent in the very attractive Th.Inc room (Therapeutic Inclusive) helps children to learn to control their emotions. This thoughtful approach to the children's pastoral well-being is echoed in the way members of staff use a range of languages to develop good relationships with the children and their parents. The staff understand and adapt to the cultures of the community. As a result, the school is highly successful in working with parents to ensure children's good attendance and also good parental take-up of classes and sessions that will help them to help their children. The school welcomes parents at any time and much is done to help them resolve personal issues. All the required procedures are in place to safeguard the children and ensure their well-being. Very good links with outside agencies enable the school to support vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who play a full part in school life. The school is poised to develop a similarly high quality of academic guidance. Systems have been streamlined and information collated. Good practice is evident in the detailed observations of the progress of children in the Nursery and Reception year, the setting of targets and the tracking systems in place for every class. The interpretation of the data is not as secure especially in deciding which children have done better or less well than they should.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The school reflects its vision statement and truly is, 'a community school that values the community it serves'. The headteacher plays a prominent role in keeping the school at the forefront of local, national and international initiatives. He is ably supported and complemented by the deputy headteacher who is spearheading the development of the curriculum and coordinating the support for new teachers. This has already had a positive impact as has her continuing work with the Nursery and Reception team to assure the quality of the provision, especially in the use of the outdoors. The judicious formation of a senior management team of four who are currently non-class based has spread the load of managing change and been influential in moving the school on. The team's industry and high level of commitment has given the school the systems and capacity it needs to ensure that intentions for improved provision become reality. Presentations keep the governing body updated but many governors are new to the role and not yet able to follow the experienced chair's lead in holding the school to account. Although the school was accurate in its judgement of most aspects of its work and in identifying the key areas for development, the school improvement plan is not centred on clear outcomes for the children.





## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school to see how well you are learning. You impressed us with your poise and confidence. It was a pleasure to talk to you and to hear your views about Cheetham. We can see why you are so proud of your school and of what you have done to make things better. We agree with you that Cheetham is a good school where you are well looked after and 'learn exciting things'. We were very impressed with all the visits and projects - not many schools grow and eat their own potatoes! Mr Barnes is clever in getting you to meet people who are successful at what they do, such as Amir Khan. He is also a whizz in making sure you know about your local community and the community knows about the school. It was good to see some of your parents using the computers.

Here are some other things we know are really good about your school.

- You are polite, thoughtful and sensible especially in eating healthily!
- You get on really well with each other, want to learn and work hard in lessons.
- You have some good ideas to raise funds and help others.
- You have a lot of space indoors and out. The new part of the school is super for the younger children, especially the balcony for the Reception children to work outside. Lucky you to have an all weather pitch, garden and willow walk!

We know that you like solving problems and are sure you will help the governors, Mr Barnes and your teachers to make the school even better. We have asked them to:

- share ideas to help you learn better, especially for those of you who need more of a challenge. You can help by telling them what makes learning exciting
- make sure that when they mark your work they tell you how well you are doing and what you need to do to get better. Perhaps you can add your own comments
- be clearer about how the things they want to do will benefit you. We are sure you will have your own ideas about this one!

We wish you all the best for the future. Keep up the good work!