



Inspection Report

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 105773
LEA Rochdale
Inspection number 277406
Inspection dates 2 November 2005 to 3 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Margot D'Arcy CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Churchill Street
School category	Community		Rochdale
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Lancashire OL12 7DJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01706 648 197
Number on roll	433	Fax number	01706 710 285
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Peter Brassington
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2000	Headteacher	Miss Vivienne Rowcroft

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school is situated on the outskirts of Rochdale. The area suffers from some social and economic disadvantage and an above average number of children are entitled to free school meals. Most children are of White British heritage, with smaller numbers from minority ethnic, mostly Asian, groups. Very few children are at the early stages of learning to speak English. The percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. When children start school their standards are generally well below those expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation of its effectiveness. Meanwood is a good school that provides well for its children and gives good value for money. Standards are above average by the end of year 6. Given their low starting points, children achieve well, particularly during Years 3 to 6 where progress is very good. By the end of Year 6, children have a very good command of basic skills and work habits to stand them in good stead at secondary school. Progress during Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall, but some middle and higher attainers do not achieve as well as they should. The quality of teaching is mostly good, allowing children to make secure gains in learning. There are occasions, however, when higher and some average attainers in Years 1 and 2 are not challenged enough in lessons.

The overall quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good and results in children making good progress overall. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning between the nursery and Reception year groups. Throughout the school, curriculum provision is outstanding offering a wide breadth of interesting experiences and being enriched very well by many additional activities. Particular care is taken over children's personal development, well-being and safety. For their part, the children are well behaved and enjoy learning. Older children in particular have a good idea of their strengths and what they can do to improve their work.

The headteacher gives a strong lead and is well supported by her deputy and other management staff. Governors give good support to the school. Key improvements have been made since the school's last inspection, especially over raising attainment in and improving provision for information and communications technology. The school has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

Focus on:

- raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2, particularly for higher middle attainers
- achieving consistency in teaching quality between nursery and Reception year groups.
- continue measures aimed at improving attendance

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall, children's achievement is good. During Years 3 to 6, children achieve very well. They meet challenging targets and by the end of Year 6 attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science.

Although standards by the end of the Reception year are below those expected, given children's low starting point they make good progress in the Foundation Stage.

However, progress varies somewhat between nursery and Reception. Reception children do well in all areas and make significant gains in their learning. In the nursery, children's progress is mostly satisfactory, but they are not always challenged enough by the teaching and activities provided.

During Years 1 and 2, progress is mostly satisfactory. However, by the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are not as high as they should be.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, benefiting from good additional help from teachers and support staff. Those at an early stage of learning English also make good progress in response to the support provided by the school. Over time, test data show no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls. Whilst children from minority ethnic groups do not always attain as highly as others, they make the same rate of progress as others in the school and as similar groups do nationally.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being are at the heart of the school's provision and are promoted well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children behave well, show care for others and display a good understanding of different cultural traditions. They really enjoy school. When asked what pleased them most about school, one child replied "everything!" Children appreciate the many good opportunities they are offered and the way adults look after them. In discussion, one said, "school is never boring, teachers explain things really well", whilst another explained, "we have lots of people to help us; the teachers always sort things out." Children are very enthusiastic about initiatives such as the 'Philosophy4Children' programme that promotes thinking skills and prepares them well for the future. There are also very good opportunities for children to make a contribution to society, for instance by caring for others through the playground buddies scheme, working alongside visiting children from a nearby special school and engaging in activities to raise money to support various good causes. The school council involves children in democratic decision-making processes and they feel proud of the influence that they have had on improving playtimes and participating in the support to eliminate bullying. Whilst attendance falls below national average, the problem is centred on one or two groups of children. The school is working diligently with outside agencies to address this. Incentives are provided to promote attendance but there is scope for these to be used more regularly.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall. Where it is most effective, there are high levels of challenge for children, activities are tailored well to their needs and lessons progress at a good

pace. Basic skills are promoted well and children are given good opportunities to work together and use their thinking skills to solve problems. The result is that they build well on what they already know and develop skills that will help them in the future. Shortcomings in less effective, though not inadequate, lessons hinged on limited challenge for higher and some average attainers. There is effective teamwork between teachers and support staff, with the latter making a good contribution. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall, but varies between nursery and Reception. In Reception, teaching and learning are good. The very effective balance between teacher led activities and those that children choose for themselves provide good challenge and opportunities for children to develop independence. Although teaching in the nursery is satisfactory overall, many of the activities are directed too much by teachers and children sometimes have to sit and listen to teachers for too long. Provision for outdoor learning is very good and children's language skills are promoted very well in Reception and by all support staff.

There is some very good use of assessment information to target support for teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, systems are still developing. Reception teachers use assessment well and nursery teachers are also working on this

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum that fully meets the needs and interests of all children, with a strong emphasis on the development of communication and thinking skills. This has a good effect on children's learning and personal development. Children in Year 6 spoke very positively about what they had learnt about problem solving and teamwork in practical activities. The key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology are developed well across the curriculum. The arts have a high profile, contributing significantly to children's cultural development.

There are many opportunities for children to take part in other activities, with an extensive and very popular range of things to do at lunchtime and after school. Children can develop interests and skills in music, sport and computing. The school ensures that all children are given every chance to benefit from these opportunities. For example, there are specialised programmes aimed at promoting children's self-esteem and additional learning opportunities for gifted and talented pupils or pupils needing to catch up. The curriculum encourages children well in developing healthy and varied lifestyles and in understanding how to keep safe.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support given to children are outstanding. Within a strong family ethos, children are looked after very well. Health and safety and child protection procedures are effective. Children at risk are quickly identified and the school ensures

that they get the support they require promptly. All staff know the children well and develop caring and supportive relationships with them. Children feel safe and confident that they can speak to an adult if in difficulty.

Children learn how to deal with inappropriate behaviour, such as bullying or racism, and know the school deals quickly and fairly with these issues should they occur. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well catered for. The school works effectively with parents and outside agencies when necessary. The learning mentor provides very good support for children who find learning difficult. Children make significant progress in their learning and attitudes to school and develop well. They receive good advice on how to improve their work. The breakfast club gives children a good start to the day and has a positive effect on attendance and punctuality.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides a strong lead to the school and has a very clear view of its strengths and weaknesses. Despite some recent setbacks caused by staffing disruption, she ensured that good standards were maintained. However, there was less monitoring and this limited action on some areas for improvement. Stability has been restored and the headteacher is successfully building a committed senior management team who share the same goals of driving up standards and continuously improving provision. The deputy has provided good support for the head.

There is a fervent whole-school commitment to providing the best quality care for children and promoting their personal development and well-being. This has created a learning environment where every child is valued. The management of provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is exceptionally good. There are good systems to check on how well the school is doing and to identify where further improvements can be made. Checks have rightly identified the need for greater consistency in teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and higher standards by the end of Year 2. This forward-looking and self-critical school shares its vision and expertise well with outside agencies and parents. The governors are very supportive and meet their responsibilities well. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The school has good capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We very much enjoyed our two days in your school. Thank you for welcoming us and talking to us about what you were doing. We thought that you were very helpful and friendly and we were impressed by your good behaviour.

We found many good things about your school. Below are some of the best:

- you enjoy school, try hard and show care and concern for each other
- the work that you are given in lessons is really interesting and there are many extra activities and visits for you to enjoy
- your teachers do a good job in helping you to learn so that by the time you leave school you have achieved good standards
- all the adults work hard to ensure that you are happy and safe. They encourage you to play well together, eat properly and take part in sport
- Miss Rowcroft leads the school well and is always thinking of new ways to make school even better for you all.

We agree with Miss Rowcroft that by the end of Year 2 you could achieve higher standards. We also agree that nursery children sometimes need more opportunities to organise their own learning and more time to explore at their own pace.

We hope you continue to enjoy school and that you are successful in the future.