



Rolls Crescent Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131953
Local Authority Manchester
Inspection number 293901
Inspection date 13 November 2006
Reporting inspector Dee Brigstock

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Rolls Crescent
School category	Community		Hulme
Age range of pupils	3–11		Manchester M15 5FT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 2263095
Number on roll (school)	219	Fax number	0161 2320382
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Fr M Thompson
		Headteacher	Mrs G Zaidi
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2001		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
3–11	13 November 2006	293901

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Rolls Crescent is a popular, above average sized school. Plans are well advanced to enlarge the school further in a new building being constructed on site. The school is situated in an area of very high economic deprivation, where acts of extreme violence are not uncommon. When pupils start school their skills and knowledge are very low.

Almost half of the pupils are at an early stage of learning English and 85% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school admits a growing proportion of asylum seekers and refugees, which now make up 38% of the school population. These pupils largely account for the above average pupil mobility in school. A third of pupils are of Somali heritage. A small number of Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish heritage and children in public care also attend school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, made up mainly of pupils with moderate learning difficulties and those with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. The proportion of pupils with a statement of educational need is broadly average. The schools gained the Healthy Schools Bronze Award in 2005 and a Leading Aspect Award in information and communication technology (ICT) in 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school providing very good value for money. The headteacher and her staff have been extremely successful in raising the self-esteem and expectations of pupils, instilling a belief in them that they can succeed. As a result of this, and excellent teaching, pupils reach broadly average standards at the end of Year 6, from exceptionally low standards when starting school. Many children begin school with significant barriers to achievement and for them to reach average standards and leave the school as confident, thoughtful young people represents outstanding achievement. The results demonstrate very good improvement since the last inspection and the school's excellent capacity to improve.

Excellent leadership by the headteacher and her senior staff set the tone, demanding the best of themselves and other staff, whilst also giving them and pupils all the help they need. This level of support can be seen in all the school does. Care, guidance and support are outstanding and this leads to first-rate personal development. The school nurtures pupils through their difficulties, and provides them with strong personal and academic support. Consequently, pupils show great regard for each other, behave well and have very positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils value each others' faiths and learn to respect their own and others' cultures in a very positive way. They say, 'There are no racists in our school,' and report that when they hear racist comments from pupils from other schools or in the street that, 'We know how to behave. We have self control.'

Some groups of pupils achieve much better than similar groups nationally, for example, boys, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the large proportion of pupils at an early stage of learning English. This is because the school addresses their personal and learning needs on a variety of fronts. The headteacher has recruited several men onto the staff who provide very positive role models for boys, and well chosen visits and visitors demonstrate excellent examples of how people from ethnic minorities and/or the local area can become successful. In addition, leaders pursue ways that pupils' work can be celebrated in a wider community, such as through exhibitions at the local museum. These events raise pupils' self-esteem and their pride in their learning.

Each term, the leadership writes a plan to raise attainment. These plans focus on one major aspect for improvement and both pupils' progress and the effectiveness of teaching against the focus are measured stringently before a new plan is written. As a result of this, and teachers' own shared vision for pupil success, teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers consistently expect the most of pupils and are provided with the support to achieve this. Support staff work very effectively with the very large proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, who are at an early stage of learning English or who need a lot of personal support. The curriculum is excellent. It is very broad and contains a strong emphasis on pupils' personal and social development and on their fitness and health. The wide range of visits provides pupils with new, exciting learning experiences and motivates them to talk and write. The Foundation Stage curriculum is outstanding. Not only is it rich but young children are made to feel secure

and are taught very well. The school constantly seeks to improve the curriculum. Priorities are addressed through the termly raising attainment plan. For example, a recent focus was on music. Teachers had good quality training, the right resources were provided and musicians from different countries came into school to give workshops. Pupils now participate in their music making with enthusiasm and skill. As a result of this excellent curriculum provision and the quality of teaching, pupils become confident speakers and their writing, by Year 6, is lively and imaginative. However, the quality of presentation is variable, not all pupils using a joined script when they could.

The leadership of the school, including the governing body, is utterly committed to the school's success. Leaders know they are doing a good job and because the school is always striving to improve and has plans to improve further it has been overly modest in grading the school's effectiveness as good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of pupils' written presentation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Year 6 pupil: 'I've been really pushed up to the level.'

For almost all children beginning in the Nursery, this is their first experience of school and their skills are very poor, many having no spoken English at all and several having experienced severe trauma. Contrast this with pupils leaving Year 6 with average standards and the extent of their outstanding achievement, particularly in writing, is clear. There has been a clear upward trend in standards up to 2006. In 2006, the admittance of several pupils late into both key stages, the majority of whom were at an early stage of learning English, depressed the results. The school's detailed tracking and assessment system and a scrutiny of pupils' current work indicate that pupils are achieving in a first rate way in Years 2 and 6. The good work in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 blossoms in Key Stage 2 as pupils gain in confidence. Their acquisition of skills in writing is exceptional. Some of the youngest children leave Reception able to write short sentences and by Year 6 their writing is lively and imaginative. Sometimes their writing is completed so rapidly that the presentation of their work suffers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Year 6 pupil: 'We're more fortunate than in most schools.'

The school's strong emphasis on pupils' personal development stems from so many pupils beginning school with extremely low personal and social skills and poor self-confidence. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils respect each other's differences and cultures because these are celebrated well in art, music and poetry. Excellent personal development is also clear in the Foundation

Stage, where children cooperate with staff very well. Pupils eat healthily in school and exercise very regularly. They feel safe and secure and are well aware of dangers outside school. All staff consistently praise pupils' achievements and pupils are proud of their class and individual awards for being good attendees in school. Attendance is now broadly average and this represents very good achievement for a school in an area of such disadvantage. Older pupils show great care in serving meals to younger pupils at lunchtime, and in caring for their welfare. Pupils' contribution to the immediate community is limited because of concerns about pupils' safety in the area. However, the school organises frequent trips out to the wider community where pupils' work has an impact. Pupils' acquisition of basic skills, including information and communication technology, and their skills in teamwork and partnership, evident in many lessons, bodes very well for their future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Year 6 pupil: 'Teachers boost your confidence.'

Teaching is outstanding because of the consistently strong impact it has on pupils' learning throughout the school. Teachers use detailed assessment information, collected from the Nursery onwards, to prepare lessons, which exactly match pupils' learning needs. Teachers' own targets for pupils' progress are also specific, and directly related to each term's raising attainment plan. As a result, teachers' planning is very focused for each group in their classes and lessons move at a cracking pace. 'Catch up' programmes for some pupils are equally successful and individual plans for children in care, and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also contain specific targets for improvement. These are known by relevant staff and used in their exemplary lesson planning. This planning, underpinned by adults' excellent relationships with pupils, results in outstanding pupil achievement. Teachers' marking is very specific and older pupils are now beginning to assess their own work against precise targets provided by teachers. They are taking some control over their own learning. Sometimes this occurs in an effective partnership with other pupils with whom they discuss and solve problems.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Year 6 pupils: 'We learn lots, like about Greece, Egypt, Nelson Mandela, Black History, Hinduism, Nigeria, Jesus, sacred books. We have lots of games and sports.'

From the Foundation Stage onwards, the curriculum is excellent. It is adapted very well to meet the needs of all pupils and promotes their health, safety and well-being very effectively. The school's success in raising standards in writing has been helped by enrichment activities, including visits by poets and authors. In addition, all pupils have more physical exercise lessons than usual, promoting their fitness and health

extremely well. Several pupils are identified as having special gifts and talents and these are provided with additional learning opportunities during the summer. Despite the school's successful focus on raising standards in English and mathematics, the curriculum is very broad. A recent focus for improvement has been on improving standards in music. Pupils greatly appreciate and enjoy this all round good education: they have more to talk and write about.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Year 6 pupil: 'The headteacher knows a lot of our families, and that helps us.'

A very strong quality of care permeates this school. Staff skilfully support and care for pupils from a very wide range of cultures and backgrounds. Pupils with little English receive well-informed and sensitive support from teaching assistants, bilingual staff and older pupils. Those with learning difficulties and other groups of vulnerable children are similarly well supported, including by external agencies. Every effort is made to ensure pupils are safe and secure and strong procedures are fully in place for child protection and for vetting staff. Risk assessments are thorough. The school has very detailed records of pupils' progress and of their future targets. Teachers' guidance on how pupils could improve their work and the use of targets to raise standards is excellent and pupils can explain precisely what they need to do to improve further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Year 6 pupil: 'She should be president - or a judge, because she makes very wise choices.'

This comment sums up the excellent leadership by the headteacher and her very well qualified senior staff who inspire other staff and pupils. Leaders' focus on raising standards has been extremely successful, without diminishing the importance of learning in the rest of the curriculum. The key to this success has been in raising pupils' belief in their own capabilities, the accurate and frequent use of assessments to plan the next steps in pupils' learning, and, the close monitoring of teaching and learning. As a result, teachers are well trained, and pupils are self-motivated learners with the potential to be good citizens of the future. The school is a fine example of a learning community. Leaders' successes are used to raise the profile of the school in other settings. For example, the school's focus on raising standards in ICT and teachers' use of ICT in lessons to promote better learning is now used as a model for other local schools. Also, the Foundation Stage leader, in partnership with an artist and an architect, has used his drive, enthusiasm and expertise to set up a model classroom in a local gallery. Governors use their expertise very well, for example in planning the building of the new school, education and finance to both challenge and support the school's development.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 making me feel so welcome in your school and for telling me so much when I asked you questions. I hope you see that I have included some of your comments in my report. I really enjoyed talking with you and looking at your work.

I think you should be very proud of your school and your work. It is an excellent school and you make excellent progress. The things I particularly appreciated are:

- your school is a very friendly, safe and pleasant place to be and you show respect for each others' faiths and cultures
- there are a lot of interesting learning activities indoors and outdoors for Nursery and Reception children
- your teachers make lessons lively, they use the interactive whiteboards very well, they expect you to work hard and mark your work really well
- everyone seems to get on well with one another almost all of the time, and your behaviour is excellent
- your headteacher and the teachers are doing an outstanding job in always trying to make the school a little bit better.

Although you are doing really well in your English, your handwriting could be neater and the older pupils could use joined handwriting all the time.

I hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Rolls Crescent Primary School such a good place to be. I also hope that you enjoy your new school building when it is finished.