



# Sandbrook Community Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 134966  
**Local Authority** Rochdale  
**Inspection number** 294229  
**Inspection dates** 13–14 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Peter Howard

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Hartley Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Rochdale
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Lancashire OL11 2LR
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01706 647743
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	307	<b>Fax number</b>	01706 710287
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs N Copp
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Danny Mulkeen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
3–11	13–14 September 2006	294229

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Sandbrook Primary School was formed by the merger of two local schools in September 2005. In September 2006 it moved to new, purpose built, premises. The school serves an area of well above average social deprivation. Over 60% of its children are eligible for free school meals, a much higher proportion than usual.

Children enter school in the Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are well below expectations: many have communication difficulties and low levels of numerical skills. The proportion of children in school with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. Most children are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of children from minority ethnic groups is low, but rising, and a few are in the early stages of learning English. The number of children entering or leaving school during the year at other than the normal time is well above average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

School staff have worked extremely hard and with much success to bring two schools together, firstly in temporary accommodation and then in new premises. It is to their credit that inspectors found a functioning school within days of the beginning of term. The school judges its own effectiveness to be satisfactory and inspectors agree. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school faces major challenges. A significant number of children move into the school other than at the normal starting time. Often these children have a history of underachievement. Those who start in the nursery have skills and abilities that are well below those expected for their age. Satisfactory provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that they make a sound start to their school life. Nevertheless, they do not reach expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. Although they make satisfactory progress through Key Stages 1 and 2, standards remain low by the time they leave school. Children's personal development and well-being are satisfactory. They are very proud of their new school and the majority want to do well. However, a significant minority of children have a passive attitude to learning and this is a barrier to raising their achievement. Behaviour is satisfactory and children feel increasingly safe in school. The school's achievement of the Healthy School award reflects its commitment to help children adopt a healthy lifestyle. Opportunities for children to participate in the school community, for example in the effective school council, are helping them to develop a sense of responsibility.

The quality of teaching, curriculum and the care given to children are satisfactory and the proportion of good practice in all areas is increasing. Teachers manage their classrooms well and other adults make a valuable contribution to children's learning. The curriculum is appropriately planned and offers a good range of enrichment activities. The curriculum for literacy and numeracy is not sufficiently exciting to motivate those children who find learning challenging. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are not used sufficiently to promote learning in all subjects. As a result of this and the low standards in the basic skills pupils are not prepared adequately for later life. Staff are very caring and arrangements for the support and protection of children are thorough. Routines for setting children targets in their learning are making an impact, but need to be sharpened to ensure that they make good progress.

The school's approach to self evaluation is an emerging strength and leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school, but their understanding of their role is still in need of development. Effective partnerships with outside agencies are making a good contribution to the school's development. The headteacher, with good support from the deputy head, other senior staff and governors, has led the process of establishing the new school effectively. Insufficient time has elapsed for all planned changes to be fully embedded across the whole school. Nevertheless, the effective management of the transition and the improvements to provision indicate that the school's capacity to improve is good.

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

- Improve pupils' achievement and standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
- Ensure that the curriculum is more exciting, to engage and motivate all pupils.
- Ensure that the targets set for children to achieve meet their individual needs.
- Extend the use of ICT to promote good quality learning in all subjects.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children's achievement is satisfactory, albeit standards are low throughout the school. These low standards reflect the exceptionally low levels of attainment on entry to school and the high frequency of children moving in and out of school. Children are given a sound start in well organised Nursery and Reception classes. By the time pupils took the national tests, at the end of Year 6 in 2006, their attainment in mathematics and science was well below average and in English, below average. However, during this first year of the school's existence, leadership and management have worked effectively to improve teaching. As a result, progress is beginning to accelerate and is now satisfactory throughout the school. For example, the introduction of a new approach to reading has accelerated the progress of children in both Key Stages 1 and 2. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic groups receive effective support and are also making satisfactory progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Children recognise that their school is improving and are proud to wear the new uniform. Children are increasingly positive in their attitudes to school, although a minority continue to have a passive attitude to learning, which impacts adversely on their attainment. While spiritual, social, moral and cultural education is satisfactory, children's understanding of those from different cultural and religious backgrounds is not as well developed as it could be. Attendance is broadly average and improving. Children feel safe and their behaviour is satisfactory. They recognise that bullying has been reduced and that instances of poor behaviour, which are more likely to occur on the playground, are well managed. Children value improving opportunities to contribute to the school community. Older children appreciate the responsibility of being 'Playground Pals' and take their responsibilities seriously. The school council is increasingly effective, helping, for example, to make decisions about school uniform and playground equipment. Children are learning about the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle and have worked hard to help the school achieve the Healthy School Award. Their readiness for the next stage in learning and the world of work is constrained by low levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching is satisfactory overall and the proportion of good teaching is increasing. This contributes directly to children's satisfactory and improving progress. Teachers manage their classes well. As a result, children are respectful to adults and classrooms are calm and orderly. Lessons are generally well planned and teachers collaborate effectively to achieve consistency between classes. Teachers ensure that children understand what they are expected to learn and marking is appropriately used to promote learning. Teachers are beginning to make enthusiastic use of ICT, but its use to promote learning in all subjects is in the early stages of development. Many children need additional support and teaching assistants and other adults make a valuable contribution to teaching and learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory and all statutory requirements are met. The practical curriculum in Nursery and Reception is well designed to meet the needs of young children. In Key Stages 1 and 2, emphasis is placed on developing pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. However, the skills learned in these subjects are not applied and practised sufficiently in other subjects. As a result, the curriculum is not yet sufficiently exciting to motivate those children who are disengaged from learning. The focus on personal, social and health education has a positive impact on children's attitude to work and their behaviour. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. A good range of clubs and extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of care, guidance and support of children is satisfactory. Staff are very committed to the welfare of the children in their care. There are good partnerships with the agencies that support children and the school is establishing an effective team dedicated to meeting children's significant social and emotional needs. This support is contributing to children's personal development and helping to raising achievement. Assessment of where children are in their learning is improving and teachers use this information to set targets to guide their learning. However, this process is not yet sufficiently accurate. Sometimes, teachers do not always recognise how little knowledge some children bring to their learning and they move on too quickly. Sometimes, work for more able children is not sufficiently challenging. As a result, children are not consistently set work and targets for improvement that help them to make good progress. Arrangement for health and safety and child protection are thorough and well managed.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher provides a clear vision for the school's future of a positive and caring ethos linked to rising standards. With good support from the deputy head, he provides effective leadership of this new school. Middle managers and subject leaders are developing in their roles and becoming increasingly effective, for example in securing improvements to teaching in their areas of responsibility. As a result, staff, who have come from the two merging schools and some who have been appointed from outside have been brought together to form a united school community. The governing body is very committed to the school and played their part effectively during the start-up period. However, governors' understanding of their roles and responsibilities is still at an early stage of development.

The senior management team has worked well together to establish the school and improve its provision. The school's self-evaluation is good. It accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses and contributes well to securing improvement. As a result, standards and progress are showing signs of improvement and achievement is satisfactory. The school recognises that at this stage in its development, strategic planning must now focus on a few key priorities to raise standards. After the uncertainties of the initial stages of the merger, parental support for the school is very strong and growing.





## 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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

### 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>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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**

As you know, two colleagues and I recently inspected your school. We enjoyed our visit because everyone was so helpful and friendly. We would like to share with you what we thought.

The adults in school have worked really hard over the last year, first of all setting up school in the Queensway buildings and then in the new school accommodation. I am sure many of you helped as well. We could see how pleased and excited everyone was to be settled in such a great new building. Classroom displays are already looking good and there are plenty of clubs for you to attend. The teachers and all the other staff in school look after you well and you should be proud of achieving the Healthy School Award so quickly.

Your teachers have also been working hard to introduce new approaches into their teaching, for example making use of lesson objectives and the new interactive whiteboards. We think they are helping you make better progress in your work. Setting you targets to guide your learning is also a good idea. However, the targets set are not always just right: sometimes your work is too hard or too easy for you. We think that you could do better at your work if your teachers gave you the chance to do more exciting work, for example making even more use of ICT and giving you chances to do more work in English and mathematics in your topic work in history and geography.

When Mr Mulkeen works with staff, governors and parents to plan how to make the school better, we think they should concentrate on a few really important things. The most important is to help you achieve more at school and one measure of this is how well you do in the end of year tests in English and maths.

Of course, how well you do at school is not all about what others do, you can help yourselves by working hard and taking part in what the school offers. We wish you all the very best for your future at Sandbrook School.