

Roundthorn Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105634
Local Authority	Oldham
Inspection number	308902
Inspection date	9 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Robert Robinson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Norman Bennett
Headteacher	Mrs Needham
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2003
School address	Roundthorn Road Oldham Lancashire OL4 5LN
Telephone number	0161 7708600
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, teaching and the curriculum, the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) and leadership and management. The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, examination of pupils' work, assessment data, interviews and documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school situated in an area of social deprivation. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is exceptionally high. The vast majority of pupils are of Asian or Asian British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has gone through a period of significant change, particularly of senior management. The headteacher has been in post since September 2007. Prior to this an executive headteacher led the school with the deputy headteacher following the retirement of the previous headteacher. The school is an Investor in People. It has gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Activemark and Healthy School Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Roundthorn Community Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Parents and pupils have a high regard for the school. A strength of the school is the care it provides for all groups of pupils. As a result, pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils are well behaved. Year 6 pupils are wonderful ambassadors of the school in their attitudes to work, relationships and care for others.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children enter the Nursery with low levels of attainment. By the time they start Year 1, pupils' standards remain well below those normally seen for pupils of this age. For many years standards by the end of Year 2 in the national tests have been exceptionally low because pupils' progress has been no better than satisfactory. Recently, there has been a strong emphasis on developing the teaching and learning in Year 1 through an exciting curriculum with a strong emphasis on language development and first-hand experiences. Assessment information shows that the current Year 2 pupils made faster progress and are on course to reach higher standards than in previous years.

In Years 3 to 6 pupils' progress is good relative to their starting points on entry to Year 3. However, until the Year 6 national tests in 2007 standards were significantly below the national average. In the 2007 tests standards rose to be closer to the national expectations. Targets set for the level expected nationally (Level 4) were met and targets were exceeded at the higher level (Level 5), particularly in English. Initiatives to improve pupils' reading and writing skills were effective, resulting in pupils making faster progress than expected. The improving picture continues to be seen in the current Year 6 as well as in other year groups. Significant gains have been made in progress in mathematics and writing though slower progress has been seen in reading. This has been identified by the school and a structured reading scheme has been introduced as well as an emphasis on plugging gaps in older pupils' knowledge of the sounds letters and groups of letters make.

The teaching and curriculum are satisfactory. Assessment information shows that there have been inconsistencies in the rate of pupils' progress between year groups. As a consequence, pupils' progress as they move through the school has been no better than satisfactory overall, although signs in lessons and tracking evidence indicate a recent speeding up of pupils' learning. The teaching is planned well to move pupils' learning on briskly. Pupils respond well to the carefully organised teaching. Information and communication technology helps pupils to understand new learning and to practise basic skills. Teachers engage pupils well in discussions though at times questioning is directed to those pupils who know the answer to a question rather than to check the understanding of particular individuals. Teaching assistants work exceptionally well to assist pupils though occasionally they are not actively involved in teaching when the whole class is being taught by the teacher. Practical experiences and visits provide valuable experiences for pupils which help to extend their learning. Literacy skills are practised well through effective links with other subjects. For example, in history older pupils wrote well organised and very well presented accounts of life during the second World War following a visit to a museum. Sound effects in the classroom of an air raid and photographs of its effect on the interactive whiteboard supported the learning and captured pupils' imagination and interest resulting in pupils reflecting in prose on their feelings. The school is reviewing the curriculum to extend the linking of subjects together with a focus on developing basic skills. Writing initiatives are having a positive effect on pupils' progress but as yet have not fully impacted on standards.

The leadership and management team have conducted a thorough review of the school's organisation and ways to improve standards. The headteacher, who is ably assisted by the deputy headteacher, provides a strong steer to the school. Self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders know what the strengths of the school are and what needs to be improved. The school has a wealth of information about pupils' progress. However, this data is not used well enough to set targets for pupils linked to small steps of the National Curriculum. Until recently, yearly targets have been set for pupils but timely interventions during the year have not been routinely dealt with to pick up any slippage in pupils' progress. From the start of this academic year, termly National Curriculum targets are set for all pupils and it is planned to extend this to half termly checks. It is too soon to see the impact of this development which is designed to rapidly alert the leadership to any pupils' underachievement. Some pupils' slow progress was apparent in the past but not picked up until the end of an academic year. A senior management team has been established to involve a wider group of staff in leadership roles. Senior leaders' teaching sets an example for other staff. Subject managers are at an early stage of development in taking responsibility for pupils' progress and standards in their subjects. The recent improvements in pupils' progress and standards at the end of Year 6, pupils' better attendance rates and their good attitude to work provide the school with good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory as are leadership and management. Children start in the Nursery with very low levels of skills. Few children attend pre-school educational establishments. Children quickly settle into the school's routines because parents and children are prepared well through home visits prior to children starting school. Progress in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. At the end of Reception standards remain well below those normally expected, although most children have a reasonable grasp of spoken English. Assessment of children's work is thorough but the recording of this information is not succinct enough to enable the leadership to check individuals' small steps of learning as children move through the Foundation Stage. Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. Learning resources indoors are good but the equipment outdoors is basic. Reception children do not have direct access to the outdoor area. This limits their progress because work indoors cannot be easily initiated, extended and developed outdoors. The school plans to improve the outdoor provision once adequate finances are available. Children enjoy learning and develop good attitudes to work though some find difficulty concentrating, particularly when whole class teaching is too lengthy. Teaching assistant and bilingual support staff work well with children individually and in small groups.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement, including making better use of assessment data to set short-term targets for individuals and groups of pupils and monitoring progress towards them.
- Develop a system to measure accurately children's small steps of progress in the Foundation Stage.
- Extend the role of subject managers so they take greater responsibility for pupils' learning and standards.

A small proportion of schools where overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next inspection.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

The quality of provision

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

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I really enjoyed the day I spent with you. Your school gives you a satisfactory education. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved and were closer to what is expected nationally by the end of Year 6 in 2007 than in previous years. I have asked the school to extend the roles of the subject managers in checking your learning and standards. Your progress needs to be more closely checked so that you achieve well. I have also asked the school to develop a way to measure accurately children's small steps of learning in the Nursery and Reception.

I was very impressed by your good behaviour and interest in lessons. You told me that you enjoy being at school, feel safe and are proud of your school. Your attendance has improved - so keep it up. Year 6 pupils set a wonderful example to you all in their attitudes to work and care for others in the school. Staff look after you well and I was pleased that you all get on so well together.

I appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn. I trust that you will continue to work with the staff and your headteacher to help them to continue to improve the school. I wish you well for the future.