

Meanwood Community Nursery and Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105773
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	324266
Inspection date	21 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Jim Kidd

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	425
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Brassington
Headteacher	Miss Vivienne Rowcroft
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Churchill Street Rochdale Lancashire OL12 7DJ
Telephone number	01706 648 197

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	21 October 2008
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Fax number

01706 710 285

Age group	3-11
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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: the standards and progress of pupils in Key Stage 1, teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), pupils' personal development including the impact of the school's work to raise attendance and the care, guidance and support provided for pupils. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, nationally published assessment data, the school's own assessment records, relevant policies, observations of the school at work including visits to lessons and analysis of parents' questionnaires. Discussions were also held with staff, the chair of governors and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence that the school's own assessments of these aspects, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This larger than average sized school serves a mixed area, but one in which there is some social and economic disadvantage. Most pupils are White British, but almost a fifth of the school's population are from minority ethnic heritages and a broadly average number have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average but there are more pupils than usually seen with a statement of special educational need. Meanwood is an accredited Healthy School, holds the Artsmark (Gold) and Activemark (Gold) awards and also has International School status.

An externally managed organisation provides a crèche in the Children's Centre which is on the same site as the school and an after-school club on the school premises.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, where pupils' personal development and the care, guidance and support provided for them are outstanding. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of what Meanwood does for their sons and daughters and one spoke for many with the words, 'This is a truly family school in which children are encouraged to grow and reach their full potential.'

Children arrive in the Nursery with skills that are below expectations for their age and which are particularly low in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress in the EYFS and in both Key Stages 1 and 2 and reach broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Inspection evidence shows that standards are rising in the EYFS and also in Key Stage 1, as a result of the school's effective strategies to raise achievement in these areas. Visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' written assignments demonstrate that they are on course to reach their challenging targets again this year. Pupils from minority ethnic heritages make the same good progress as their classmates. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similarly good progress because of the focused support they receive from teaching assistants and learning mentors.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school when they are not formally supervised is impeccable. They have an enviable generosity of spirit: playground 'buddies', pupil mentors and reading partners support their contemporaries, including younger pupils, willingly and with eagerness. The healthy food tuck shop, run by Year 6 pupils, is just one example of the excellent self-discipline displayed by the vast majority of pupils. Furthermore, how to keep fit and also eat healthy food are bywords in school and pupils offer visitors accurate and quite detailed advice on what constitutes a balanced diet!

Pupils are very proud of their school and are extremely keen to talk to visitors and to show them just why they enjoy school so much and why they feel so safe in school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have a very good awareness of cultures and religions different to their own and take part in regular celebrations of a variety of faiths. 'International Week' is an essential element of the school calendar and pupils in all years consider the differences and similarities between countries across the world. Music and drama are key elements of school life and the choir and musical groups perform regularly at functions in the immediate area. Pupils are proactive in raising money for a range of charities, local, national and global and are big-hearted in their support for the elderly and for people less fortunate than themselves.

The quality of teaching and learning is good across the school and there are examples of excellent practice in all key stages. Warm relationships between teachers and pupils and between pupils are strong features of lessons. Pupils respond positively when teachers have high expectations, but the amount of challenge in lessons can be variable. New technology, including the electronic whiteboard, is utilised well as a teaching and learning tool and pupils use computers with consummate skill. Pupils have many opportunities to work in pairs in many lessons, but the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills is not always integrated into learning activities.

The curriculum is outstanding and is designed to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of their ability, can make progress in all aspects of school life. It makes an excellent contribution to their personal development and encourages them to see learning as lifelong journey, which is not restricted to the classroom and to purely academic subjects. To this end, the school continues

to add to its wide range of extra-curricular activities that enrich pupils' learning experiences. Pupils speak highly of the lunchtime, after-school and residential sessions, which foster their skills in sport, music, dance and drama. They say that these activities are well supported by all years and inspection evidence confirms their view.

The innovative 'Th.Inc' room is just one example of the outstanding care, guidance and support that the school provides. Pupils are delighted to show visitors the 'tree house', the educational games and the artwork, which are such important features of this facility. They are quite open about how this area helps them to examine their emotions and to relate with others. Learning mentors and teaching assistants are totally committed to the well-being of their pupils and support them comprehensively and sensitively. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified rapidly and effective strategies are put in place to ensure that they can take full advantage of everything the school has to offer. The assessment of pupils' progress is very good and they are offered many opportunities to evaluate their own work and that of their peers. Child protection and safeguarding systems are in place and fully meet national guidelines.

Leadership and management are good. The inspirational headteacher leads the school with skill and verve and is supported well by talented and committed staff, who share the same vision for how the school should develop. Strategies to encourage pupils to attend school more regularly have been very effective indeed and attendance has improved markedly since the previous inspection and is now broadly average. Community cohesion, both inside and outside the school is taken seriously and the school does what it can to ensure that all celebrate and respect the successes of each culture and faith. Meanwood is an inclusive school, provides good value for money and has good capacity for further improvement. In the words of its pupils, 'Everyone looks after everyone else here and no-one really has any worries!'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The coordinator leads the area by example and has a perceptive understanding of Early Years education. Consequently EYFS provision is good. Strategies, to improve the consistency in the quality of teaching between Nursery and Reception have been effective and have led to improved standards. On entry to the Nursery, skills are below age-related expectations overall, but children have particular weaknesses in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress in both years, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and by the time they join Year 1 their skills are approaching what is expected. The curriculum provides a good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated learning and is complemented by links to real-life situations. Teachers try hard to prepare their children for the next stages in learning, for example, when boys and girls dress up as fire fighters in anticipation of the visit of the local fire brigade. The outdoor area is large and very well equipped. Behaviour is good in both years and children play and learn together happily. Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Children enjoy their lessons and are fascinated when they sort books into fiction and non-fiction categories. All adults treat their children with the utmost dignity and respect and the care and support provided for them is of high quality. Parents are very positive about how the EYFS develops their children personally and academically and comment 'our children are thriving and are receiving a broad range of activities and opportunities'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that speaking and listening activities are integrated into the learning in all lessons.
- Ensure that pupils are challenged to do their best in all lessons.

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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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	2
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**

Inspection of Meanwood Community Nursery and Primary School, Rochdale, OL12 7DJ

Thank you all so much for the wonderful welcome you gave me when I inspected your school recently. You were so polite and friendly and I really enjoyed visiting your lessons and watching you learn. I am particularly grateful to those of you who came to talk to me at lunchtime and also to the boys and girls who gave the tour of the 'Th.Inc' room during the afternoon. I would now like to tell you the good things about your school.

Meanwood is a good school and you are right to be very proud of it. You make good progress in your lessons and reach similar standards to children in other primary schools. This is because teaching is good and all the grown-ups who work with you give you excellent support and guidance when you are finding things difficult.

Your behaviour is excellent, you get on so well with each other and the older pupils do a lot to help the younger ones feel happy in school. You know exactly what makes a balanced diet and you gave me so much advice on how to eat healthily. I don't think I have ever seen before as many pupils buying food from the healthy tuck shop. You also take part in many sports clubs and a wide range of activities at lunchtime and after-school. Your school productions have a marvellous reputation in the local community and so many of you play musical instruments.

Your teachers and teaching assistants try hard to make sure that each one of you enjoys Meanwood and that you can all make progress in every part of school life.

The staff are very proud of you and are making improvements to the school all the time. I have asked them to make sure that you are challenged equally well in all lessons so that you can reach even higher standards. It will also help if teachers give you more opportunities to talk to, and learn from each other. You have your part to play too: please keep working hard, attending regularly and helping each other.

Best wishes to you all and thank you again for your contribution to the inspection.