

Milnrow Parish Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105823
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	324279
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Sarah Drake

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	181
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	Rev Robin Usher
Headteacher	Mrs H Woodcock
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	St James Street Milnrow Rochdale Lancashire OL16 3JT

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is smaller than average and serves an area, wider than its immediate surroundings, that has mixed socio-economic circumstances. The great majority of pupils are White British but the proportion that belongs to minority ethnic groups is slowly increasing. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. Broadly average numbers are eligible to receive a free school meal. The proportion of pupils that has learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just below average but an above average proportion has a statement of special educational needs. Slightly more pupils than is usual join or leave the school partway through their primary education. The school offers Early Years Foundation Stage education in one Reception class. A new deputy headteacher joined the school in April 2007 and two assistant headteachers were appointed in September 2007. The school has Investors in People status; it holds a Healthy School award and the Activemark, is a silver Eco-School and holds a leading aspect award for music.

A private out-of-school club operates on the premises. This was inspected independently and its report is available on the Ofsted website.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. There have been significant changes in leadership since the last inspection. There is a good sense of teamwork and direction that is enhancing the provision for children. The impact of this is showing itself in Key Stage 2 where the rate of progress is increasing and standards at the end of Year 6 are, for the first time for a number of years, above average. However, pupils' achievement is satisfactory rather than good because their progress has been uneven through the school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils' progress is satisfactory. Standards here are broadly in line with expectations for pupils' age, similar to when children join the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers.

Adults throughout the school form good relationships with pupils who, in turn, generally get on well with each other. Their personal development and behaviour are good which means that the school provides a happy environment in which to learn. Pupils cooperate well, understand how to keep fit and healthy, and act in a sensible, safe manner. Some teaching is good, providing interesting activities and suitable challenge for pupils' different abilities that lead to a real buzz in the classroom. However, the quality of lessons is too variable and, overall, it is satisfactory. Pupils sometimes sit listening for too long, teaching assistants do not always provide effective support and the work is not always well matched to individuals' abilities and needs. The school is at an early stage of developing its systems and practice for helping pupils to understand how to improve their work.

The overall quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. Pupils feel that adults in school listen to them and their concerns are dealt with. A nurture group has been established since the previous inspection that provides effective support for those with emotional, behavioural or similar difficulties. The good quality curriculum is well enhanced, in particular by music with many pupils learning instruments, a thriving brass band and lively choir. Pupils enjoy school because of the many interesting activities. Their regular attendance, skills in literacy and numeracy and positive attitudes prepare them well for their future life in the workplace

Satisfactory leadership and management are helping the school to improve. After some difficult years, the headteacher has now established a leadership team with an increasingly shared sense of commitment and consistency of approach to addressing the school's priorities. Good partnerships with the local authority, other outside agencies, the church and most parents are all focused on raising the quality of education and care. The administration team is efficient and helpful. The school provides satisfactory value for money. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored and actions are taken to support those who are falling behind, although the quality of the support is not checked. Some records, policies, and documentation are not monitored or kept rigorously up-to-date. This means that it is not always clear who has responsibility for what or how much of an impact actions are having on pupils' achievement. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Most children join the school with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development since staff place a high priority on this aspect of their learning. Children build good relationships, behave well, and work well

together and independently. They are well cared for and they learn good basic health, safety and hygiene skills. In other areas of learning children make satisfactory progress so that they join Year 1 with the skills expected for their age. This is because, although all adults develop warm relationships with children and engage them in conversation to develop their language skills, lack of precision in the planning means they do not always maximise the opportunities for the development of skills. Observation and assessment procedures do not capture in sufficient detail the different children's range of skills and abilities. This means that the planning does not clearly identify the next steps in individuals' learning and activities do not always provide sufficient challenge for all children. More use is made of the outdoor provision than in the past, but the planning does not identify what skills it is intended children should develop outside. The staff work well together as a team and also with parents, some of whom regularly volunteer their help. The staff provide children with a safe and secure environment which ensures that they enjoy their time in Reception.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rate of pupils' progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- Improve the consistency of teaching quality, especially planning, across the school.
- Ensure records, policies and practice are up-to-date and rigorously monitored to evaluate their effectiveness.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

For the past five years standards have been broadly average at the end of both key stages. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 has been improving but satisfactory for the last two years. Current pupils are making good progress in Key Stage 2 and Year 6 pupils are working at above average levels in English, mathematics and science. There have been particular improvements in English, especially the numbers working at the higher Level 5 in writing, in response to the school's focus on this subject. In Key Stage 1 progress is slower, with current standards still broadly average and no pupil writing at the higher Level 3. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development stems from the school's strong sense of values that permeates all its work. Assemblies provide pupils with opportunities for reflection and help them develop an attitude of helpfulness toward each other. Pupils are sociable, friendly and behave well. They are generally kind and considerate although, on occasion, a few do take pleasure in riling those who find self-discipline hard to achieve. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their above average attendance and the popularity of clubs and activities such as the choir. Music greatly enhances their cultural awareness and contribution to the community but pupils' understanding of our diverse society is not so strong. Older pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibilities such as playground pals and recyclers. School councillors organise charitable fundraising events and each year the oldest pupils run a popular Fun Day for the rest of the school. Pupils participate keenly in sport – they are the local

champions in Kwik cricket. They understand the importance of diet to maintaining good health. They act safely, for example, when moving furniture or keeping well hydrated in hot weather. Their positive attitudes, regular attendance and rising standards equip them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Warm relationships create a positive classroom environment in which most pupils enjoy their learning. Where the teaching is good, lessons move at a good pace with interesting activities and good quality questioning that encourages pupils of different abilities to explain their thinking and deepen their understanding. Elsewhere, the questions require only brief answers or pupils are expected to spend too much time listening and not enough actively engaged in their learning. Lesson planning throughout the school provides little detail of how the activities will be adapted to suit individuals' different abilities or of the expected outcomes of the teaching assistants' work. The quality of this support varies greatly, with some ensuring that all pupils take full part in the lesson whereas others do little that helps pupils develop the strategies and language to enable them to make good progress. In most lessons the adults move around classrooms well, providing support and challenge that helps pupils sustain their focus but sometimes pupils produce little written work and often this involves the completion of worksheets. Pupils are supportive of each other and generally collaborate well when, for instance, discussing their thoughts with a talking partner or evaluating others' work. The teaching usually makes the 'steps to success' for learning clear and teachers provide pupils with verbal feedback but marking of work is largely confined to ticks and a congratulatory comment. Pupils say that they find those few occasions when their work is highlighted with 'tickled pink' for success and 'green for growth' guidance very helpful for their future learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good quality curriculum effectively supports the development of pupils' basic skills. Over the past year the strategy devoted to raising standards in writing has been extended to include pupils' writing in other subjects, such as history. This has had an impact at Key Stage 2 but not yet at Key Stage 1. Information and communication technology is also being used increasingly across the curriculum. Extra provision to support those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is mirrored by that to extend the older more able pupils. For example, a mathematics session led by a high school teacher had some Year 6 pupils fizzing with energy as they solved algebraic equations. Strong provision to promote pupils' personal, emotional and physical development, both in school and through the many sporting clubs, ensures they deepen their understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Specialist teaching in music and French, combined with regular educational visits including a residential, add breadth and enjoyment to pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils say they feel safe in school and that they have someone to turn to in times of need because 'all teachers are nice and kind'. Procedures to ensure safe recruitment of staff and promote health and safety comply with requirements although risk assessments are formulaic

and only irregularly updated. Early diagnosis of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities together with good use of specialist agencies ensures they receive suitable provision. However, there is little monitoring of their progress as a discrete group or of the quality and impact of the support provided for them in the classroom. Good arrangements ensure that such pupils and their peers are well prepared to move to secondary school. Pupils are aware of their targets in literacy and numeracy and have regular morning work and homework to support their independent learning but they receive little written guidance about how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership team has changed significantly since the previous inspection. It demonstrates a shared commitment and adopts a consistent approach to improvement. The headteacher closely monitors pupils' progress and identifies those who may need extra support. School self-evaluation now involves staff, pupils and governors as well as the senior leaders, and parents have the opportunity to contribute although few do so. The improvement plan identifies strengths and areas in need of development but it does not have clearly defined success criteria in terms of the desired outcomes that actions will have on pupils' achievement. Some documentation, policies and practice are not sufficiently up-to-date. Governors now receive more detailed information than in the past about pupils' standards and achievement, which is enabling them to work more closely with the school when holding it to account. Supportive working with the local authority is nurturing school improvement, for example, in introducing assessment systems to involve pupils more closely in their own learning. The school ensures no pupil is excluded from activities but does not monitor the effectiveness of its strategies, for example, to promote equality of opportunity or support those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Its work towards achieving the United Nations Rights Respecting School Award is increasing pupils' awareness of their place in the world, and pupils' involvement in local musical and sports events supports community cohesion there. Increasing numbers of parents attend school coffee mornings. However, there are no links with schools in other countries or with schools with a different cultural make-up in this country, and little work within school to extend pupils' understanding of other cultures.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

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

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	2
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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

Inspection of Milnrow Parish Church of England Primary School, Rochdale, OL16 3JT

Thank you for the welcome that you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you, watching you at work and also seeing how much you enjoyed the Fun Day. We thought that you all coped well with the very hot weather and were pleased that so many of you made sure you had plenty of water to drink.

Yours is a satisfactory school and one that is improving. For example, you've got more chances to practise your writing skills, standards are rising at the end of Key Stage 2 and there is a named member of staff to whom you can go if you're upset. All staff build good relationships with you and you mostly get on well together and behave well so you feel at ease in school and can concentrate on your learning. You have lots of extra clubs and activities which make your learning exciting. You are very lucky to have so many opportunities to play musical instruments and sing – I enjoyed hearing both the brass band and the choir.

Your school is improving because the senior leaders are determined that it should do so and are all working together to bring about change. To make it even better we have asked the leadership to do three things:

- make sure that pupils in the Reception class and Key Stage 1 make good progress in their learning
- make sure that all teaching is as good as the best in school
- review the school's actions and all the required records and policies regularly to make sure they are up to date and helping you to develop and achieve well.

Your job will be to continue to enjoy school and attend regularly.