

Shawclough Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105766
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	354352
Inspection dates	29–30 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Jim Kidd

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 of pupils on the school roll	451
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Jo Lyons
Headteacher	Mrs Julia Sandiford-Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 18 lessons or part lessons and saw 18 teachers in their classrooms. They held meetings with pupils, including members of the school council and 'Eco squad', teaching staff, support staff, members of the governing body and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including school development plans, relevant policies, pupil progress monitoring data, reports written by the School Improvement Partner and pupils' workbooks. Inspectors also scrutinised 173 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 36 completed by staff and 83 returned by pupils in Key Stage 2.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of the school's work to improve attainment in writing
- the impact of the school's work to promote the learning and progress of the increasing numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those at early stages of learning English
- how and with what effect the school has tackled the area for improvement from the previous inspection in relation to challenge for more-able pupils
- the involvement of the governing body in monitoring school performance and in strategic planning.

Information about the school

This is a much larger than average sized school. There are an average proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below that usually found. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is twice the national average and has increased since the previous inspection. Almost half the school's population speaks English as an additional language. Shawclough is a Rights Respecting School, a nationally recognised Healthy School and is working towards further accreditation in relation to its Eco School status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school, which has addressed the areas for improvement from the previous inspection most effectively. Teaching is now consistently good across all years and the challenge for more-able pupils is higher. The governing body plays a seminal role in analysing performance as a foundation for strategic planning. As a result, self-evaluation is accurate and all staff play their part in gauging how well the school is doing. The outstanding leadership promotes high levels of teamwork. Staff respond positively and are proactive in their ongoing search for even better ways to meet the needs of their pupils. The school has, therefore, outstanding capacity for sustained improvement and provides excellent value for money.

The outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage provides children with a wide range of opportunities to make choices in their learning. Pupils from all groups continue to achieve and enjoy well throughout the rest of the school and their attainment is above average by the end of Year 6. Standards in mathematics and science have been above average at least over a five-year period. Although they are improving steadily, pupils' skills in writing have hampered their overall progress in English over time.

Pupils love their school and their behaviour in lessons and at breaks and lunchtimes is excellent. They make sure that no one is left out and encourage their sometimes diffident counterparts to join in a variety of games. They feel safe in school because, in their words, 'we all look after each other and adults are always around if we have any problems'. The school welcomes an increasing number of pupils from minority ethnic heritages and is justly proud of the racial harmony within its walls.

Pupils have a keen understanding of what makes a balanced diet and speak highly of the healthy food prepared for them by the staff in the school canteen. They even grow their own fruit and vegetables and show visitors their garden with pride. The school sees correctly its pupils' active involvement in protecting the environment as the catalyst for extending their knowledge of similar issues in a global context.

The curriculum is an object lesson in providing pupils with an exciting range of activities, which enhances their basic skills, meets their interests and raises their aspirations. Similarly, care, guidance and support are of the highest order and all staff, including the talented and committed team of teaching assistants, has the personal, social and emotional well-being of each individual pupil foremost in their minds. The school recognises the inextricable link between pupils' confidence and self-esteem and their academic progress. It does all it can, and with considerable success, to make its charges feel both valuable and valued.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' skills in writing by:
 - giving them more opportunities to practise their skills in real-life situations
 - offering them more opportunities to rehearse their learning, through drama and role play for example, before they begin to write
 - share across the whole school the exemplary practice already evident in the teaching of writing.
- Further promote community cohesion by using pupils' undoubted interest in sustaining their own environment to encourage them to research how their counterparts in other schools across the world are attempting to do the same.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils' engagement in lessons is invariably outstanding and they are eager to learn. They enjoy working in pairs and in groups and are only too keen to support each other and to act as an extra learning resource for their classmates. They encourage those who are at early stages of learning English to become involved in class activities and they help them to develop their confidence in speaking. In addition, the outstanding support from teachers and teaching assistants lead to pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, making good progress and achieving well across the school. Pupils' skills in mathematics and science are consistently above average at least, and they are sometimes well above expectations. Their skills in writing are improving, but attainment here is not as good as it is in science and mathematics. The school recognises wisely that more use of drama and role play as a preparation for written assignments is of the essence if standards are to continue to rise.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and the wider community and take on a range of responsibilities willingly. They demonstrate a real generosity of spirit and their work for a range of charities is a byword: they appeared on television following successful fund-raising activities for 'Children in Need', for example. The school council, eco squad', playground pals and buddies have a high profile and an impressive reputation in school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and they have an enviable social conscience, welcoming the increasing numbers of pupils from minority ethnic heritages and from Eastern Europe with open arms. Their impressive art work adorns the walls in classrooms and on the corridors, and increasing numbers of pupils are keen to join the well established choir and orchestra. Attendance is broadly average and rising. The percentage of pupils who are persistently absent has fallen significantly since the previous inspection.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is consistently good and there are examples of exemplary practice in all key stages. In the best lessons, challenge and expectations are high and pupils are required to think more deeply about the subject matter. In an outstanding Year 6 literacy session, for example, questioning was of such a high order that pupils were able to produce impressive persuasive writing, often using quite complex vocabulary. The school is developing more strategies to enable pupils to practise their writing skills in real-life situations, inviting pupils from other primary schools to the opening of their 'pizza parlours', for example. This initiative needs to be embedded across the school. Assessment is of exceptional quality and pupils are fully aware of what they need to do in each lesson to reach their challenging targets. The 'WAGELL' (what a good example looks like) strategy pervades the life of the school and there are examples in every classroom, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Marking is regular, detailed and demonstrates an ideal balance between congratulatory comment and advice on how work could be improved next time.

The curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal and academic development. The personal, social and health education programme is a major strength and encourages pupils to be reflective, to learn from the experiences of others and to raise their aspirations. Creativity is the foundation for the delivery of the curriculum and through a range of initiatives, 'Forest Schools' for example, the value of outdoor learning

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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is promoted. Pupils are able to see the links between subjects and are aware of how they can reinforce their skills in literacy and numeracy in all their lessons. Investigation and personal research are emphasised and pupils in Year 4/5 came up with convincing conclusions, following a detailed consideration of historical artefacts, for example. The wide range of extra-curricular activities enriches pupils' learning to a significant degree; the visit of the 'Fusion Chef' to Year 6 is a highlight of the term.

Care, guidance and support are exemplary. Pupils' awareness of their rights and responsibilities and warm relationships between children, young people and adults are the bedrock of the school's ethos. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those identified as vulnerable receive individual and bespoke support from teaching assistants, the learning mentor and the family support worker. The support for pupils at early stages of learning English is of a similar high standard. They all achieve as well as their peers as a result. Opportunities for massage and also the therapeutic inclusion room are just two examples of how the school puts the emotional well-being of its pupils first. In addition, there are excellent links with a variety of outside agencies for the benefit of pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff speak with one voice about how the school engenders teamwork and about how the outstanding headteacher and proactive senior team ensure that all adults work together to promote success for each individual pupil. A typical comment is, 'I am proud to be a member of staff in this school, where children flourish as individuals and where their needs are given priority.' Indeed, ongoing improvement for the benefit of its pupils is central to the school's work. Leaders recognise, for example, that now is the time to share exemplary practice already evident in the teaching of writing across the whole school.

Governance is outstanding and governors are actively involved in evaluating the school's work and in planning for the future. They support everything the school does but also hold the leadership to account with the utmost rigour.

The school is a calm and welcoming community in which equality of opportunity for all is emphasised. Discrimination in all its forms is challenged relentlessly and pupils themselves say, 'Racism is wrong and we have nothing to do with it!' Child protection and safeguarding procedures meet requirements and all policies are securely in place.

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The school is now working hard to repair and replace some of the fencing around its extensive grounds.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is good overall and is demonstrated inside its walls by the respect with which pupils from all cultures and religions treat each other. Pupils' awareness of the global community is beginning to develop and the school recognises that it needs to encourage them to find out about the experiences of children in other parts of the world. It is correct in its view that Shawclough pupils' interest in protecting the environment could be the starting point.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Although there are variations from year to year, children's skills on entry to the Nursery are generally below age-related expectations and often well below in communication, language and literacy. As a result of high quality teaching and exceptional nurture, children thrive and make excellent progress across both Nursery and Reception. The Nursery, in particular, is an oasis of calm and children are happy and confident within it. In Unit 1, which comprises the Reception and Year 1 classes, children's learning experiences are equally enjoyable and they develop high levels of independence and begin to make choices about what they want to explore. Learning is fun and children's progress is monitored very carefully indeed.

All members of the Early Years Foundation Stage team, exceptionally well managed by the unit leader, are enthusiastic and totally committed to providing the best possible learning environment for the children in their care. Indeed, children are given excellent

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guidance from the moment they enter Nursery on how to be a successful learner. The care, welfare and safeguarding of pupils are given the highest priority. Staff have been particularly successful in developing adventurous outdoor provision and it is a delight to see children climbing, swinging, sliding and experimenting with sand and water. Parents and carers are encouraged to be part of their children's 'learning journey' and they have the highest regard for the setting. As they say, 'we couldn't think of a more stimulating environment for our children'.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers are entirely satisfied with what the school is doing for their sons and daughters, are happy with their children's experiences at Shawclough and feel it meets their sons' and daughters' particular needs. A typical comment is, 'we have always been pleased with the school's commitment to the education of the "whole child". Staff are approachable and maintain high professional standards.' A very small minority of parents and carers do not believe the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. The inspection team judges the school's engagement with parents and carers to be good and is aware that teachers are always trying to develop further links with them through, for example, workshops and coffee mornings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Shawclough Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 173 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 451 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	100	58	68	39	4	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	103	60	66	38	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	75	43	84	49	7	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	73	42	84	49	9	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	83	48	80	46	5	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	70	40	91	53	7	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	92	53	72	42	3	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	92	53	69	40	7	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	70	40	95	55	2	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	64	37	93	54	9	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	62	36	86	50	15	9	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	68	39	92	53	4	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	83	48	80	46	2	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



1 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shawclough Community Primary School, Rochdale, OL12 6DE

Thank you all for the lovely welcome you gave to the inspection team when we came to your school recently. You were so polite and kind to us and we really enjoyed our visit. We are particularly grateful to those of you who came to talk to us on Tuesday lunchtime. I really enjoyed chatting with the 'eco squad' and it was a pleasure to be shown the garden and the vegetables and fruit you are growing. I told you that I would be writing you a letter about what we felt about your school, so here goes!

Shawclough is an outstanding school and you have every reason to be so proud of it. Your behaviour is excellent and you always try so hard to look after your classmates and also younger pupils. The school council, play leaders and buddies make sure that everyone is happy and they take so much responsibility to help your teachers run the school. Your teachers and all the other adults take excellent care of you and you make really good progress in your studies as a result. Your work in mathematics and science is particularly good and your standards in these two subjects are higher than in many other schools in the country.

Your headteacher and all the other staff are so keen to make your school even better. I would like to help too, so I have asked them to support you even more in your writing by giving you more opportunities to practise your writing skills in real-life situations. I have suggested that they give you even more chances to talk about what you are going to write before you put pen to paper. You are so good at looking after the environment so I have asked them to help you find out about other schools across the world that are doing this too. I'm sure you will enjoy doing that!

Thanks again for your contribution to the inspection.

Yours sincerely

Jim Kidd

Lead inspector

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