

Whittaker Moss Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105781
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	324268
Inspection date	16 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Marie Cordey

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)	292
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	Cllr Rodney Stott
Headteacher	Mrs Joan Williamson
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	off Elmsfield Avenue Norden Rochdale Lancashire OL11 5UY
Telephone number	01706 342342
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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 pupils' achievement and standards; the quality of teaching and learning; the pupils' personal development and well-being; and how well the school's leadership promotes care and high standards. Evidence was gathered from: national published assessment data; the school's self-evaluation; assessment records, policies and minutes of meetings; observation of lessons; pupils' work; discussion with pupils, staff, two community governors; and the questionnaires returned by parents. 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, in its self-evaluation form, were not justified. These have been included, where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is a large-sized primary school drawing pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision includes two Nursery and Reception classes. The school has gained the Healthy Schools award, Eco silver award and the Activemark award for its sport provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Whittaker Moss is an outstanding school. The overwhelming majority of parents agree because they consider that the school really takes care of their children's personal as well as their academic development. Typical comments include: 'we can't praise the staff enough', 'it is nurturing in all aspects', and 'values, tolerance and politeness are important and these are the foundation for the school's good results'. Pupils' welfare is indeed at the heart of the school and pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their excellent behaviour and attendance is reflected in their care for others and their enjoyment of all that the school has to offer them. Pupils are proud to serve their community and are zealous environmentalists. They consciously eat healthily and know how important it is to keep fit. Both parents and pupils are very appreciative of the many sporting activities and educational trips as well as the wide range of before- and after-school clubs.

Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are consistently high. By the time pupils leave school their standards in all subjects are especially high and they make outstanding progress from their above average starting points. Pupils use sophisticated language and their work is carefully analysed and presented. They enjoy problem solving and challenging, investigational work. Decisive leadership action is based on thorough tracking of all pupils' learning. As a result there are no marked differences between the achievement of the various groups of learners, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Senior leaders use data effectively to close any gaps between boys' and girls' attainment.

Teaching and learning are outstanding because lessons are exceptionally well planned to make learning exciting and enjoyable. Pupils are actively involved in lessons through interactive whiteboards, thoughtful responses to questions and, perhaps most importantly, through plentiful opportunities for them to work together. They are keen to discuss every aspect of their work and encourage each other to develop further insights and a more thorough understanding of their work. Consequently, pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding. Teaching and support staff have high expectations of pupils, and of themselves, which are reflected in detailed subject knowledge and very bright, attractive and informative displays. Excellent assessment procedures and helpful, day-to-day marking mean that pupils are very well informed about how they are doing in their work as well as what they need to do to make it better.

Leadership and management by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the governors are outstanding. They are keen to stress the effectiveness of working together and, to this end, have successfully involved subject leaders in planning school improvement. The headteacher's vision is crisp and non-negotiable. As a result pupils are exceptionally well looked after and attain the highest possible standards. Targets are challenging and pupils aspire to achieve their best. Pupils are appropriately safeguarded because of effective procedures for their care and well-being. Excellent partnerships with parents and local authority partners make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development and community cohesion. Leaders understand the school very well because of accurate and searching self-evaluation. Governors are exceedingly well informed and knowledgeable. They are keen to support school as well as question its performance. It is the school's consistently high performance and the impact of its leadership and management in sustaining a high quality of education which demonstrate its outstanding capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children in the EYFS is good, with some aspects of teaching being outstanding. Children and their parents are made to feel welcome and this helps children to settle into school life quickly. A wide range of activities encourages children to explore and enjoy their learning. These are matched to the needs of the individual and, as a result, children achieve well. They revel in sounding out words and demonstrating their knowledge of numbers. Good quality teaching leads to effective learning. Children in the Reception classes could not wait to share the discoveries they had made on their morning walk. They were very pleased to find 'real life' insects and trees they had previously studied in books. Committed teaching and support staff printed and laminated photographs immediately afterwards and children excitedly identified exactly what they had learned. Strong leadership correctly identifies the accelerated learning that is made when children can explore and play outdoors and when they plan their own activities. Consequently, leaders are planning to extend opportunities for children to learn outdoors and to concentrate assessment on activities children have chosen themselves. Children's starting points vary from year to year between broadly average and above expected levels for their age. Currently, children are progressing quickly from levels on entry above those for their age to reach levels significantly above those expected.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend opportunities in the EYFS for outdoor learning so that children have chances to learn in lots of different ways, including through planning their own activities.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 Whittaker Moss Primary School, Rochdale, OL11 5UY

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me when I came to your school. You were very friendly and polite and made special efforts to tell me about all the good things you do in school. I would especially like to thank those of you who met with me to talk about your contributions to school. Your school is outstanding because you are looked after and cared for very well and you reach very high standards in your work. Your headteacher is exceptional because of the way she cares for each one of you. In fact, all of the staff share in wanting to do the very best for you. You are exceptionally well-behaved and clearly enjoy school. Your attendance is excellent. You are also very involved in your community and proud of your activities on the Eco committee and school council.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make a good start to their school life. They are well cared for and made to feel welcome by you. I have asked the school to provide more chances for children in these classes to choose their activities and use the equipment outside so that they have chances to learn in lots of different ways.