

Norden Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105774
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	287325
Inspection dates	12–13 June 2007
Reporting inspector	J Austin HMI

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	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr S Haslam
Headteacher	Mrs L Cotton
Date of previous school inspection	June 2002
School address	Shawfield Lane Norden Rochdale OL12 7RQ
Telephone number	01706 641013
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Norden is a much larger than average primary school and includes a Nursery with 39 children who attend part time. It is situated in a village on the outskirts of Rochdale. Some of the pupils live in the village but many come from further afield and their socio-economic backgrounds, while broadly average, span a wide spectrum. The percentage entitled to free school meals is well below average. The majority of pupils are White British: about a fifth are of Pakistani heritage. Many more pupils speak English as an additional language than is typical of similar schools. Although the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average, the number with statements of special educational needs is well above average. The school has gained the ActiveMark Gold, Healthy Schools, Basic Skills Quality Mark and Silver Eco awards.

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, inclusive of all its pupils and with strengths in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, all of which are outstanding. Pupils behave very well, are considerate in the way they respond to one another, and polite and courteous to adults. They enjoy all the school has to offer and acquire many of the skills needed to be good citizens. They make a positive contribution beyond school, both locally through participation in a range of community events, and more widely through charitable fundraising. Within school older pupils approach their roles, for instance as buddies, librarians or house captains, seriously and display a mature understanding of their responsibilities. The school council plays an important part in making improvements to school life. For example, it is responsible for establishing and running the successful healthy tuck shop, selling fruit at breaktimes. Pupils understand the importance of both food and exercise in leading a healthy lifestyle. Many participate enthusiastically in the broad range of sporting activities offered both in and beyond the school day. They benefit from extended opportunities, including some for sport, provided at the school for the wider community. Pupils respond well to the good curriculum offered, appreciating the chance to learn both French and Spanish. They enjoy activities that enrich the curriculum, including residential visits, trips and visitors.

The outstanding care and support for pupils, and the good relationships which characterise the school, help to make pupils confident and enthusiastic learners from an early age. Overall, teaching and learning are good. In lessons, teachers expect pupils to behave well and work hard. Pupils respond well to these expectations and rise to challenges. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, particularly at lower Key Stage 2, and these account for the varying rate of progress pupils make. Overall though, pupils achieve well. From starting points that are broadly average on entry to the Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress to reach standards that are above, and often well above, average by the end of Key Stage 1. These early gains are not, however, built on steadily during Key Stage 2. Progress dips before regaining momentum so that by the time pupils leave school their attainment is above average in English and slightly above average in mathematics and science. The work of teaching assistants with small groups and individuals is very effective. They know pupils' needs well and the targeted support given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to make good progress.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has secured the commitment of staff to driving through the improvements required to realise this. An innovative leadership structure has been established and, together, staff are working hard to develop a new approach to delivering the curriculum. The school's view of itself is accurate and appropriate strategies are in place to remedy the inconsistencies in the quality of provision. Systems to track the progress of individual pupils are being developed and enabling the school to target support well to pupils who need help with their learning. The school, supported by good governance, has tackled successfully weaknesses from the last inspection; the capacity to make further improvement is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children enter the Nursery at three, their skills and understanding vary considerably but overall are those expected for their age. Not all children continue through the Foundation Stage and at the beginning of the Reception year a new intake of children joins. They come with a range of pre-school experiences: levels on entry are typically below average especially with regard to speech and language. A number speak little or no English. Children rapidly develop positive attitudes to learning and all make good progress, notably in their physical and creative development. Good support for children whose mother tongue is not English enables them to make good progress. Overall, by the time children begin Year 1, the level of their skills and understanding are above those expected for their age.

Children's behaviour and enjoyment of learning are good. At the beginning of the day children arrive keen to play: they select an activity of their choice and quickly become engaged in experimenting and learning. They respond well to the warm welcome provided by staff and the well laid out, stimulating environment for learning. Despite children's interest in their chosen activities, they obediently follow adults' requests to tidy away resources and meet together in groups to, for example, share books. Teaching and learning are good. Staff have very good relationships with children and plan well to cater for their interests and needs, including learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to children's learning and personal development. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good or better across the school.
- Improve achievement at Key Stage 2 to raise standards in mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. From broadly average levels on entry to the Foundation Stage, children make good progress and begin Year 1 working at levels that are above those expected for their age. This good groundwork is built on and consolidated successfully in Key Stage 1 so that by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2 standards are above average. In the 2006 Key Stage 1 national tests, results were well above average, a trend sustained for the previous five years. The 2007 Key Stage 1 teacher assessments indicate that the standards reached by the current Year 2 pupils are lower than those of recent years. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average in English and slightly above average in mathematics and science. This pattern is reflected in the 2006 Key Stage 2 national test results. Although pupils make good progress overall, this is not even as they move through Key Stage 2. Achievement slows where teaching is not as dynamic or well matched to pupils' needs as seen elsewhere in the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They clearly know right from wrong and this is reflected in the codes of conduct for each class drawn up by the pupils. Pupils show an excellent level of respect for each other, adults and themselves as well as for their environment. They are polite, happy and well mannered, and are able to speak clearly and confidently to each other and adults alike. Pupils from the various ethnic backgrounds represented in the school work and play happily together, and are regularly involved in a range of celebrations from different cultures and faiths.

Behaviour is good throughout the school and this helps pupils feel very safe and enjoy their time in lessons and on the playground. Attendance is consistently above average, giving a clear indication of how much the pupils and their parents value the school. This is reinforced by the very many positive comments expressed by parents and children in support of the school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and show this through the positive choices they make when selecting food to eat at lunchtime and from the healthy tuck shop, and in their involvement in the very many opportunities for sport and exercise offered by the school.

Pupils' contribution to their community is outstanding. Pupils take on a range of responsibilities in the school to assist other pupils, including as school councillors, playtime monitors, house captains, librarians and hall managers. They are also very involved in their local community, helping the elderly during the regular luncheon clubs, giving concerts and through a gardening project undertaken by the Eco group. Pupils are well prepared for their future by achieving good basic skills, developing the capacity to work well with others, taking on responsibilities and witnessing lifelong learning taking place within this extended school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The majority of lessons inspected were good or better. The best teaching is characterised by high expectations, careful planning, and ensuring pupils know the focal point of their learning. Teachers use questioning well to ensure that pupils think hard, and at the end of the lesson there are enjoyable ways for pupils to show the teacher how well they have understood their work. In one outstanding lesson pupils were encouraged to speak openly of their own senses and feelings and then to write using an exciting range of adjectives and adverbs. Satisfactory lessons lacked pace and rigour. They were characterised by unfocused objectives leading to questioning which was too imprecise to build learning as effectively as possible. In all lessons the good behaviour of pupils enabled excellent relationships with their teachers and each other. Progress is assessed regularly and pupils who are experiencing difficulties receive the support they need. All teaching assistants make a very effective contribution and work in

partnership with teachers to help ensure that the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is consistently good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. There are opportunities for all pupils to learn two modern foreign languages. Provision for physical education is very good and the community school sports programme gives great benefit to pupils. The opportunities provided by the extended school ensures that community activities become an integral feature of learning and many visitors to lessons enrich the opportunities experienced by pupils. The wide range of extra-curricular activities contributes well to pupils' good achievement. The school's focus on the environment ensures that pupils take seriously their responsibilities to be good citizens. One member of the school's Eco group said, 'We have been chosen and the school is really depending on us to look after the wildlife. Everyone tries hard to look after the school.' This environmental awareness extends into lessons such as science and also gives a focus to help boost literacy skills. In recognising the challenges ahead, the school is in the process of realigning the curriculum to ensure that creativity becomes the central focus of learning activities within topic-based lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care provided for all pupils in this highly inclusive school is outstanding. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified at an early stage and they receive the support they need from committed staff to make good progress. Targeted help for pupils experiencing particular difficulties enables these pupils to progress well. Pupils with disabilities are cared for particularly well with their specific needs being catered for, allowing them to be fully involved in school life. 'I have a buddy to help me to take part in all the activities. The school cares about everybody,' said one pupil with physical disabilities who is enabled to take a full part in the busy life of the school.

The transition of pupils from different stages of their education is managed well and pupils are given opportunities to express their concerns and to experience the next key stage, class or school before their move. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported in school and make good progress as a consequence of the strong focus on developing spoken English at the start of their school life. Regular risk assessments are undertaken and measures put in place to safeguard children are in line with the latest government guidelines. Overall, academic guidance is good. Where practice is best, pupils receive detailed individual feedback and clear short-term targets for improvement. However, this is not consistently embedded across the school and is a factor in pupils' uneven progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher has set a clear direction for the school and is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher in pursuing this. Parents value the work of the school highly. Their views are typified by the following comment: 'The school is a happy one with a pleasant atmosphere. This is also a great base for the local community to get together.' Senior leaders are realistic about the school's strengths and areas of comparative weakness and are working assiduously to bring about improvements. A number of key aspects of the school's work are being reorganised. More frequent and systematic tracking of the progress of individual pupils has been introduced, enabling extra support to be targeted more effectively. This has highlighted the uneven progress pupils make as they move through Key Stage 2: senior leaders have appropriate strategies in place to address this. In addition, a central focus is the development of an integrated approach to delivering the curriculum. Management structures have been reorganised radically to support this, distributing responsibilities and involving all staff in teamwork. Middle leaders are enthusiastic about their new roles but have not had time to get to grips with them.

Governance is good. The governors are fully involved in the life of the school and active in its direction. They are well informed about school priorities, providing support and challenge to the school leadership. The school provides good value for money. Resources are used efficiently and the deployment of staff is well matched to the school's priorities. The synergy between the school's extended provision and the community facilities means that the benefits of these resources are maximised for pupils.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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

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.

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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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



13 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Norden Community Primary School, Rochdale, OL12 7RQ.

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed coming to your lessons and talking to you about your work. Special thanks to the school council, Eco group and Year 6 pupils who gave up time to talk to us. You told us lots about the good things that happen in school and that helped us with the inspection. We agree with you: your school provides you with a good education.

The things we like most about the school are:

- the excellent way in which staff care for you all. This helps everyone, including those of you who find learning difficult or who have physical disabilities, enjoy school and learn well
- your polite and courteous behaviour, consideration for others and enthusiasm for learning. We were impressed by way you discharge your responsibilities, for example, as house captains or hall monitors
- the way in which the work of the school council and Eco group helps to improve school life. Your healthy tuck shop is a good idea. You understand how to keep healthy and lots of you participate in a wide range of sport and exercise
- the good start to school you get in Nursery and Reception. For those of you who don't speak English at home, the good support you get to learn English really helps you settle well and make good progress in school.

As you know from your school work, things are never perfect and there are always ways to improve. So we are asking your headteacher and teachers to:

- make sure every lesson is as exciting and challenging as the best we saw. You certainly have opportunities to learn in interesting ways
- help you all do as well as possible in mathematics and science so that you get even better test results.

We would like to wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Austin
Her Majesty's Inspector