

Rack House Primary School



Children develop language and imagination through role play



Darren Amesbury, Headteacher with his Assistant Headteachers

Strong leadership is essential to ensure a school continues to progress. When I was appointed Headteacher at Rack House in 2014 I changed the leadership structure adding three Assistant Headteachers which has transformed the way the school works and has ensured accountability. As a result, we have had a gradual renewal of the teaching staff who all have high aspirations and expectations for every child.

Preparation begins before children enter school

In Early Years we engage with families before they start in our Nursery by reaching out to parents and children to attend termly open days. Parents and children are invited to the school to complete questionnaires which allow staff to understand the individual needs of their children. Staff also visit children in their homes which allows them to prepare for the individual child and for the cohort, ready for the start of the Autumn Term. Any needs or strengths are identified and interventions are put in place.

We utilise support and advice from an internationally-renowned Early Years consultant, Alistair Bryce-Clegg. We are meeting our vision of nurturing independent, perseverant and resilient children and promoting child-initiated learning. Planning takes into account the interests of the children whilst ensuring the children make as much progress as they can at this crucial early stage of their development.

We believe strongly in the importance of outdoor learning and have invested heavily in a bespoke outdoor area for Reception and an updated outdoor area for Nursery.

REPORT CARD

- » Headteacher: Darren Amesbury
- » Location: Wythenshawe, Manchester
- » 23 Teachers
- » The school is close to the city centre and faces the challenges of all inner city schools
- » Pupil Premium: 60%
- » English as an Additional Language (EAL): 22%
- » Number on Roll: 402

» SINGAPORE MATHS
MADE EASY

- » Children explore with physical resources e.g. 5 rows of 4 apples make 20 apples
- » Children see pictures of 5 rows of 4 apples make 20 apples
- » Children then learn that $5 \times 4 = 20$

The area is designed to have an effect on the writing ability of children as it allows children to develop their fine and gross motor skills. Creativity is promoted in this 'play area' which allows children to progress in their education through play.

How we ensure progress and attainment

We know children learn in many different ways. Our exciting curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and our pupils are ready to learn. We try to make all children 'passionate' about reading and we pride ourselves on immersing our pupils in high-quality texts such as *The Selfish Giant* by Oscar Wilde and *The Lost Happy Endings* by Carol Ann Duffy. In literacy, our learning takes place around texts which enthuse and inspire children to become creative writers.

We have introduced Singapore Maths in Years 1 to 3 which has an emphasis on teaching pupils to solve problems and build mathematical fluency without the need for rote learning. Pupils learn to think mathematically and we introduce new concepts using the Concrete, Pictorial, Abstract (CPA) approach. This has been so successful we will roll it out next year to Years 4 and 5.

The children have many enriching classroom experiences to support their understanding and progress. They are encouraged to reflect on their work, peer assess and respond to feedback which both challenges and supports all the pupils. Pupils' needs are closely monitored through rigorous analysis of outcomes and then necessary intervention programmes are put in place to support all children.

Pupil progress meetings occur every half term in each Key Stage. They allow each child to be closely monitored from their individual starting points to ensure progress is made by all. By pinpointing key groups of children for intervention by the class teacher, targets are set for all to achieve in the next half term. Such a vigorous structure has made it clear that the school has high expectations of teaching and learning as well as placing accountability on teachers. Work scrutinies, lesson observations, pupil voice and target setting ensure a consistent approach and allow staff to monitor any gaps in children's learning.

Teachers and Teaching Assistants work together to ensure regular interventions meet the needs of all pupils. Book scrutinies allow leaders to see progress across the key stages as well as ensuring a consistent approach to marking and feedback. This is a crucial role in our development and has been achieved through whole staff training.

We cater for all aspects of education

Where pupils present higher levels of social and emotional needs and well-being, Rack House makes provision to nurture attitudes and strategies so that pupils can have their issues addressed. The impact of this is measured and tracked using the Leuven Scales, developed by Dr Ferre Laevers at Leuven University in Belgium, for well-being and involvement.

“Learning takes place around texts which enthuse and inspire children to become creative writers

The open sand pit encourages the development of gross and fine motor skills





Left: The children work collaboratively at the waterfall
Right: Risk-taking, perseverance and friendly competition at the monkey bars

There are clear social problems facing some of our families and for this reason we have a dedicated pastoral lead who allows children to develop their learning in school despite facing such problems.

We believe that education does not begin and end in the classroom.

We like to develop the complete child and ensure that they publicly celebrate their talents. Our children have performed at The Royal Northern College of Music for the past two years playing steel pans. Our boys' football team won the league last year, the rugby team made it to the Manchester finals, our cross-country runners have been asked to attend Manchester trials and our tennis team is through to the Manchester finals. We have just started our first netball team which is proving successful. We have a dedicated team to support our children in their endeavour for sporting excellence of which the school, children and parents are rightly proud!

The school now offers complete wraparound care and is soon to welcome two-year-old children into school. This is despite the fact that the building is more than 80 years old and plans to re-build it have been abandoned. However, it is not the bricks that make the school but, rather the children and the team

that help the children to progress in all areas of their life.

We are successful because we embrace the challenges we face and attempt at all stages to move forward with the knowledge and support of our parents. Our children are unique individuals who have their own specific needs and, at times, challenges to overcome. By working together with parents and keeping them informed at all stages, we strive to conquer all challenges that face the children, ensuring they achieve their potential in all areas of their lives.

“ It is not the bricks that make the school but, rather the children and the team that help the children progress ”