

# Rucstall Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116040
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	357872
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gehane Gordelier HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	220
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Terry Tillman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Monica Barker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 October 2007
<b>School address</b>	Holbein Close Hampshire RG21 3EX
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed 10 teachers and 16 lessons as well as one assembly.

Inspectors held meetings with staff and the Chair of the Governing Body and vice-chair, and had discussions with pupils, parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at its self-evaluation, subject reviews, action and improvement plans, a range of policies, minutes from the governing body, a report produced by the School Improvement Partner, published data and the school's data and information about pupils. Inspectors also looked at pupils' workbooks, teachers' marking and their lesson plans, curriculum plans and all documentation relating to safeguarding. They took account of the responses to 133 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, 21 by pupils and 24 by staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well pupils of different ability are progressing at Key Stage 1, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, and their levels of attainment.
- The quality of teaching throughout the school, and the extent to which it meets the different needs of pupils, particularly the most able.
- How well developed the roles of middle leaders and managers are, and the impact they are having in helping the school to realise its ambitions and raise pupils' attainment.

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is rising and is broadly average. Pupils come from a range of different socio-economic backgrounds. Few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds or are learning to speak English as an additional language. There are currently no pupils with a statement of special educational needs, although the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average and rising. The school has National Healthy School Status, Football Association Charter School Status and an Eco-Schools Silver Award. There is a breakfast club provided by the school which offers free places to pupils who are in receipt of free school meals. There has been a relatively high turnover of staff in the last three years. In January 2011, a new building offering pre-school provision was opened on the school site. This is not led or managed by the school and will be subject to a separate inspection.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

This is an effective school that has improved since its last inspection. The outstanding care, guidance and support provided to pupils ensure that they feel valued and well supported. The good relationships between staff and pupils contribute to the happy and caring family atmosphere that permeates the school. Parents value the efforts made by staff to support and care for their children. One parent wrote: 'The school has a very good sense of community and the children all look out and care for each other.' Another reported that: 'Our son feels happy and safe in school and has formed good relationships with the adults in his year group.'

Pupils generally make satisfactory progress from their starting points. However, there has been a concerted effort to improve their rate of progress, particularly in Years 5 and 6. As a result of a range of support for teachers, intervention strategies for pupils and good teaching, pupils' achievement accelerates in upper Key Stage 2. This is leading to levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science that are above and, at times, significantly above, national averages by the end of Year 6. Levels of attainment in the rest of the school remain broadly average. Pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are not always as good as they should be in Years 1 and 2 because expectations of what different groups of pupils can achieve are not always high enough. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make expected progress, but achieve more in Years 5 and 6 because of better teaching and support.

Pupils achieve particularly well in their physical education, this is partly due to the good coaching they receive from instructors who come into school. They also benefit from the very good music provision provided by Hampshire music services. The quality of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection and provides pupils with more memorable learning experiences both in and out of school. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their visit to a science and technology activity centre, for example. There are pockets of good teaching throughout the school, but the majority is satisfactory.

Pupils feel very safe in school. They said that the school listens to their views and that there is always somebody to speak to if they have any concerns. Staff help pupils to develop into confident, considerate and well-rounded young people. This is evident in the positive relationships between pupils and their good behaviour in and around the school.

Leaders, managers and governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, their view about how well the school is performing is sometimes over generous. This is because self-evaluation is not rigorous enough in focusing and reporting on pupils' learning, progress and levels of attainment. As a result, subsequent improvement planning does not always include enough detail about how the school will raise standards or how progress will be measured. In the absence of a deputy headteacher, the headteacher is well supported by the two acting assistant headteachers and the governing body.

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However, because the roles of leaders and managers across the school are not sufficiently well developed, not all contribute sufficiently to raising attainment in their areas of responsibility. This, and the extra load it places on the headteacher, limits the school's capacity to improve to satisfactory. The school has made adequate progress since its last inspection, but shortcomings in the quality of teaching and learning and the challenge offered to pupils still remain.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise levels of attainment in Key Stage 1 by:
  - accelerating the progress made by pupils in Years 1 and 2
  - ensuring that expectations of what all pupils can achieve are high enough
  - embedding basic skills more fully across the curriculum.
- Ensure the quality of teaching is consistently good or better by:
  - improving the quality of daily plans so that they always identify the skills and knowledge that pupils of different abilities are expected to learn
  - embedding the use of assessment strategies in lessons
  - maintaining a suitable pace of learning
  - highlighting key and unfamiliar vocabulary and encouraging pupils to use these words
  - making better use of additional adults particularly in the first part of lessons.
- Develop the role of leaders and managers at all levels so that they have a greater impact on raising attainment and driving improvement.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Data show that the attainment gap between boys and girls in Year 6 is reducing, but boys continue to perform better than girls. Pupils enjoy their lessons and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. In a good lesson for Years 5 and 6, pupils were learning how to convert improper fractions to mixed numbers. They were able to grasp the mathematical concept being taught and were suitably challenged. However, in many of the lessons observed, even the ones that were good, pupils struggled with some of the vocabulary because key words had either not been sufficiently well explained or were not displayed.

Pupils make a good contribution to their school and local community, for example by assisting in the dinner hall, helping at playtimes and by taking part in local events, such as the Basingstoke music programme. Pupils know what constitutes a healthy, balanced diet and about the importance of taking regular exercise. They enjoy the hot, tasty meals prepared on site at lunchtime. They show a good understanding of other cultures and faiths. In many ways the school prepares pupils very well for the future, especially with regard to their personal and social development. The school is effective in raising pupils' aspirations. They learn an appropriate range of computer skills and older pupils develop a sense of financial awareness. However, their basic skills, although satisfactory by the end

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of Year 6, are not sufficiently well embedded lower down the school. Levels of attendance, which were well below average for the last three years, are now rising rapidly, and were above average in the autumn term.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers' learning intentions are shared with pupils and most lessons include a degree of practical activity. Good teaching in the school is characterised by teachers' good subject knowledge, high expectations and awareness of the different ways in which pupils learn. In a lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, the teacher used the interactive whiteboard to demonstrate reflective symmetry. Pupils were captivated by the colourful visual image and subsequently enjoyed the activity of creating their own symmetrical patterns using mirrors to check if they had done this correctly. Where teaching is less effective, planning does not identify sufficiently well the skills and learning that will be taught or how the different needs of pupils will be met. Although most lessons include a degree of challenge this is all too often left until the end of the lesson. Talk partners are not used regularly enough to help pupils articulate what they are learning including the use of unfamiliar vocabulary. Too many lessons are over directed by the teacher so that pupils are not encouraged to use their initiative, and, in the weaker lessons, teaching assistants are under employed, particularly in the first part of the lesson. The work in pupils' books is generally well marked and pupils appreciate having curricular targets.

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However, too often marking does not say what pupils have to do next. Furthermore, the use of assessment strategies in lessons does not enable teachers to judge accurately the progress and learning taking place.

The changes made to the curriculum have led to lessons becoming more engaging. The provision is enhanced extremely well by a wide range of after-school clubs, visits to places of interest and visitors to the school. Pupils learn to speak French; they also learn about the importance of caring for the environment. Long-term curriculum plans promote continuity and progression well. However, teachers have yet to ensure this is fully reflected in their daily plans especially when covering more than one subject in a lesson.

The pastoral support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, including those with medical needs and particular aptitudes, is outstanding. One parent wrote: 'My son is gifted and talented and the school has been amazing at fitting him in so that other children are accepting of his differences. I cannot praise them enough and we consider ourselves very lucky to have our son attend such a fantastic school.' The breakfast club ensures that those pupils who attend it begin their school day able to concentrate in lessons; this provision is also helpful for parents who work. There are extremely good systems in place to support the transition of older pupils when they leave for secondary school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The strong leadership of the headteacher has helped to keep the school on track despite numerous challenges in relation to staffing. She has also helped to nurture among staff a good team spirit so that they feel valued and well supported. There is also a high level of confidence in the leadership of the school and the quality of governance. Leaders and managers are highly motivated and keen to help the school improve. However, some do not yet possess the necessary skills and others have not yet had the opportunity to lead in their area of responsibility. This, together with the shortcomings of action and development plans, is reducing the effectiveness of the school's efforts to drive and embed improvements. Although there is regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, areas identified for improvement are not always followed up and lesson observations do not focus sharply enough on the progress of different groups of pupils or the levels at which they are working.

Governors have taken a leading role in helping the school to promote community cohesion and have done this very well. They have also helped to improve the quality of the outdoor learning environment for the youngest children and the accessibility of the school's site for

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those with a disability. They provide the school with increasing levels of challenge. The school's good engagement with parents and carers is reflected in the high number of responses to the inspection questionnaire. The good partnerships the school has with outside agencies contribute well to pupils' learning and well-being. Good examples include the sports links as well as the provision for pupils who are gifted and talented. The latter benefit from master classes provided by a local secondary school teacher. The school promotes equality of opportunity effectively and tackles the very few incidences of discrimination well. However, a lack of rigour in the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the school's policy in this area has contributed to the underachievement of some pupils in the school. All safeguarding procedures are fully in place; staff as well as governors have received good training in this area. The school's single central record is of high quality. Resources are well matched to pupils' needs and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage has been adversely affected by high levels of staff turnover in the last three years. As a result some of the good systems that were in place in the past have not been maintained and some of the data have not always been reliable. Nevertheless, the good work with parents, carers and pre-schools continues to enable children to settle quickly and happily.

Staff ensure there is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities and this helps children to develop an appropriate level of independence for their age. Children make sound progress and attain particularly well in learning about numbers as labels for counting. They are developing positive attitudes to learning and making better progress in their knowledge of letters and the sounds they represent, and in mathematics. Children



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learn about the different uses of technology: a good example is the use of programmable toys to support learning about positional language such as moving forwards, backwards, left and right. The quality of planning is not of a consistently high standard and as a result there are sessions which focus more on activities than learning. This results in some missed opportunities for developing children's communication, language and literary skills. All welfare requirements are firmly in place and staff ensure that children are safe. Although management is sound, there is not a sufficiently rigorous overview of the quality of provision for all children in this part of the school or of how well different groups are progressing.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

A larger than average proportion of parents and carers completed the questionnaire and a few made additional comments. Responses to the questionnaire were very supportive of the school. An overwhelming majority of parents and carers believe that teaching is good and have confidence in the school's leaders and managers. Inspectors observed mostly satisfactory teaching with some good lessons. Almost all parents and carers believe the school encourages their children to have a healthy lifestyle. Inspection evidence endorsed this view. Most believe that behaviour is dealt with effectively but a very small number of parents and carers expressed concerns about bullying and how the school deals with it. Scrutiny of documentation and discussions with pupils and staff demonstrated that effective systems are in place to monitor and resolve the few incidents of undesirable behaviour.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rucstall 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 133 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 220 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	73	55	58	44	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	86	65	45	34	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	74	56	56	42	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	42	72	54	4	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	72	54	61	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	67	50	57	43	7	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	73	55	58	44	1	1	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)	61	46	58	44	4	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	60	45	67	50	3	2	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	41	66	50	4	3	5	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	40	71	53	7	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	82	62	50	38	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	78	59	52	39	2	2	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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



14 March 2011



Dear Pupils



### **Inspection of Rucstall Primary School, Basingstoke, RG21 3EX**



Thank you on behalf of the inspection team for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. You were very helpful and polite and we were very interested in what you and your parents and carers told us about the school. We have judged that your school is satisfactory and improving. The following are some of the best things about your school.

- The staff keep you safe and look after you extremely well.
- You enjoy school, are well behaved and know how to be healthy.
- Your teachers help to make learning interesting and fun.
- You make a good contribution to your school and local community.
- By the end of Year 6 you reach levels in English, mathematics and science that are better than other pupils in most schools.
- The school works well with your parents and carers and other partners to help ensure you are well supported.
- The governing body does a good job and has helped to improve the way the school works with the local community.



To help your school to become even better, we have asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning so that more lessons are good or better
- ensure pupils in Years 1 and 2 make better progress
- develop the roles of leaders and managers to help make the school better as quickly as possible.



We know that you will want to help in every way you can, so please continue to try hard in lessons and come to school regularly.



Yours sincerely



Gehane Gordelier

Her Majesty's Inspector

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