

Russell Hall Primary School

West End, Queensbury, Bradford, BD13 2AW

Inspection dates 5–6 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Standards are average. Given the starting points to Year 1, attainment at Year 6 could be better, particularly in reading.
- Progress is not fast enough in Years 1 to 4.
- Pupils are not gaining a secure foundation in the sounds that letters make (phonics). Opportunities for pupils to read independently are limited in some classes, which holds back achievement in reading.
- The performance of pupils known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium is not good enough.
- The leadership of teaching has not yet removed the inconsistencies in teaching in order to raise achievement.
- Pupils do not get the same deal in all classes. Some pupils are over-reliant on adult direction, marking is inconsistent in its quality and more-able pupils are not always catered for.
- The school is not accurate in its evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses. It is over-optimistic in some of its judgements.

The school has the following strengths

- The school provides pupils with a safe, secure and caring environment. Much help is given to pupils and families who are vulnerable due to their circumstances.
- Children get a good start to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are examples of outstanding teaching there and in upper Key Stage 2.
- Pupils across the school are well behaved, love learning and work very hard when expectations match their needs. Some display good levels of independence and maturity which prepares them well for their future.
- The school is a highly valued part of the local community. The large majority of parents value its contribution to their children's education.
- The curriculum is creatively planned. There are examples of excellent strategies to inspire pupils to learn and enjoy school.
- The senior leaders and governors have moved the school forward since the previous inspection. Very beneficial partnerships with other schools and educational consultants are raising standards in mathematics and aspects of English.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 part lessons. Meetings were conducted with governors, the staff team and two groups of pupils. In addition, a meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Information from the scrutiny of a range of school documentation added to inspection judgements. This included an analysis of pupils' work, details relating to safeguarding, the improvement plan, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance and records of pupils' standards and progress.
- The views of parents were ascertained by analysing 14 responses posted on the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- An analysis of 14 staff questionnaires, together with an ongoing dialogue with teachers and teaching assistants, gave the inspectors an insight into the views of the staff.

Inspection team

David Byrne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Paula Thompson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better so that pupils make good or better progress and secure higher standards, particularly in reading, by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to read independently across the curriculum, and securing better provision for the teaching of phonics
 - making sure that there is a sharper focus on meeting the needs of more-able pupils in all classes
 - reducing the over-reliance of pupils in some classes on adult direction so that they become more confident to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning
 - providing clear guidance for all pupils about how to improve their work, and deepening pupils' understanding of their targets for reaching higher levels in their work.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management at all levels on pupils' achievement by:
 - enabling leaders with the skills required to improve teaching so that inconsistencies are removed
 - rigorously evaluating all aspects of the school's performance so that precise actions are planned to raise achievement
 - strengthening the policy for meeting the needs of the most-able pupils and evaluating its impact on pupils' performance
 - establishing a strategy for identifying the progress of pupils known to be eligible for additional funding through pupil premium across the school, so that the impact of the funding can be evaluated and the gaps in achievement removed.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because the attainment and progress of some pupils are not as high as they could be.
- Children begin the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are just below typical for their age. They settle well and learn the routines of school quickly. In the Nursery and Reception Years, children make good progress, particularly in their personal and social development and communication skills. The majority reach the expected level of development for their age by the start of Year 1.
- The advantage gained from this good start is not being developed enough as pupils move through the school. Standards at Year 6 have been broadly average in each of the last three years. Most pupils have made progress at rates expected for their age but too few have exceeded expected progress. Progress occurs at a steady rate between Years 1 and 4 but could be much better; in Years 5 and 6 it accelerates so that it is good and, at times, outstanding.
- Teachers in upper Key Stage 2 have worked hard to rectify gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge by the end of Year 6. Good improvements to the curriculum and teaching for mathematics and writing are increasing progress across the school. The impact is evident in the 2013, provisional, test results. Progress has improved in mathematics and writing, and the proportion of pupils exceeding the expectations for their age has risen, particularly in mathematics. In reading, progress was slower and a slight decline in standards is evident.
- Results in the grammar, punctuation and spelling test at Year 6 are below the national average. Staff have introduced initiatives to improve pupils' basic skills in literacy but these are too recent to overcome some gaps in children's learning, particularly in phonics at Key Stage 1 where standards are just average.
- In Key Stage 1, results at Year 2 have risen over the last three years to average in 2013. The proportion of pupils gaining the national expectations in the most recent screening tests for phonics at Year 1 was below average.
- Although there is scope for pupils to do better in reading, standards are average. Most pupils read fluently and with confidence in a range of texts but for some pupils not enough scope is provided for independent reading throughout the day.
- Standards in mathematics are now increasing. In 2013, three pupils successfully attained the highest Level 6 in mathematics; this is an indication that the most-able pupils are starting to achieve better.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is now similar to the national expectations because their progress is accelerating noticeably at upper Key Stage 2. This is because pupils are expected to write at the same high level in all subjects, not just literacy. These high expectations are not, however, consistent in all classes across the school.
- The attainment of pupils who are supported by pupil premium money fluctuates each year. Overall, however, the attainment of such pupils is between one or two terms behind those who are not supported by the money. This gap is not closing quickly enough, despite the school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity.
- Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. They are included in all activities and are supported in lessons. Variations in the quality of teaching mean that their progress varies from class to class.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable to secure the best outcomes for pupils. These differences in quality mean that the experience for pupils moving through the school is not always as good as it could be and progress is hampered.

- The role of teaching assistants has recently been reviewed; there is now more emphasis supporting pupils with most need. Generally, the teamwork between support staff and teachers makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. There are occasions, though, when support staff's interventions in lessons lack focus and pupils are not challenged enough.
- In the best lessons, pupils are inspired, they are stretched beyond existing knowledge and skills and they develop a deep understanding of their own standards and how to improve their achievement. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's interests are harnessed to motivate learning. During the inspection, bonfire-linked activities promoted creativity, provoked talk and debate and widened the children's knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Excellent teaching at upper Key Stage 2 accelerates progress rapidly. Exceptionally imaginative techniques enable pupils to take responsibility for their writing. Excellent use of subjects such as history and science give pupils a reason to read and write.
- Across the school, new teaching initiatives, aimed at giving pupils a secure understanding of the basic skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, are improving learning in mathematics. Precise planning and a systematic approach to lessons are increasing the impact of teaching on learning and starting to raise standards. Some gaps due to past weaknesses in teaching are being resolved but it is early days and there is more to do.
- Where teaching requires improvement, the needs of some pupils are not fully met. Work is set at too low a level and pupils are not enabled to have the confidence to take a lead in their own learning. At times, pupils seek too much direction about what to do and do not use their initiative enough. While phonics is taught regularly, at times pupils are set at the same ability; the needs of the more-able and those who need more support are not explicitly met. Across the school, there is not enough awareness among teaching and support staff of the needs of pupils known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium.
- The quality and impact of marking vary considerably. At its best, all work is marked regularly and pupils are very aware of how to improve. In some classes, pupils are consistently encouraged to consider and respond to the comments or suggestions made. Some work in some subjects, however, is not consistently marked and prompts for improvement are not clear.
- Productive partnerships with parents are promoted by encouraging regular homework and home-based research activities. The provision of 'story sacks' and regular reading activities at home offer parents good involvement with their children's learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. In lessons where activities capture the pupils' imaginations, their behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. They work exceptionally hard and willingly collaborate with each other to solve problems, and achieve the highest possible standards of presentation of their work. In some lessons where tasks are not demanding enough, behaviour remains good but interest levels drop and pupils' pride in their work is not as high.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and secure and that bullying is unheard of. This view is supported by the views of all parents registered on Parent View. A review of records held in the school confirms the positive picture.
- At break times and during lunch, pupils are well mannered and polite. Outdoors, they take advantage of the good range of equipment available to promote activity, health and well-being. The school successfully promotes among pupils a good understanding of the choices required to be safe and healthy. They understand 'stranger danger' and are aware of the risks of using the internet.
- Excellent levels of care are provided for pupils who may be vulnerable for whatever reason. A skilled learning mentor works with such pupils to help them overcome personal challenges, become resilient and to feel confident to access the curriculum and all aspects of school life.
- Much effort, particularly by the parent involvement worker and learning mentor, has been put into reducing absenteeism. Increasingly, the school community accepts the importance of avoiding taking holidays during term time. Attendance is rising and is now just above average.

There have been no exclusions in recent years.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because consistently good teaching has yet to be secured. In addition, there is an over-optimistic view of the school's performance in relation to the criteria used to judge schools.
- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher's passionate leadership has advanced the school. Expectations of pupils have risen and are accelerating progress. The speed of improvement has been increased by delegating key responsibilities to staff and by working in partnership with other schools and educational experts to widen the knowledge and skills of staff.
- Senior leaders regularly observe teaching and review the quality of pupils' work across the school. This is beginning to secure better consistency in the quality of teaching but is yet to secure consistently high quality teaching.
- Assessment is now accurate. Tracking of individuals' progress is rigorous and identifies pupils at risk of falling behind. The attainment and progress of pupils known to be eligible for additional funding through pupil premium are not tracked carefully enough. This reduces the ability of leaders to monitor the impact of the additional funding in narrowing the gap in achievement between such pupils and others.
- The formal systems for managing performance are raising staff's expectations of their effectiveness in raising achievement and progress. There is now a strong link between performance and pay.
- The curriculum enables pupils to be creative and to develop most aspects of their personal and academic skills. Opportunities for theme days, such as in science, engage pupils' interest. Pupils go on trips to deepen their understanding of topics, for example, a visit to a coal mine gave pupils first-hand experience of the dark and sultry work conditions. This prompted some excellent pieces of empathetic writing and outstanding works of art depicting the conditions.
- The school successfully encourages good levels of spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Pupils have time to reflect and consider ethical and spiritual issues, and to learn about different religions and cultures.
- A good range of clubs and activities in addition to classroom activities widens pupils' experiences. The government grant for developing school sports is being used to widen opportunities for all pupils' participation in sport and outdoor events. It is too early to assess the impact of the grant on pupils' well-being.
- The local authority offers good support to the school. It keeps a close eye on its performance and works with staff to secure improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors support the school and are very keen for it to succeed. They access training and are rigorous in keeping abreast of local and national developments. The governor team shares responsibilities very effectively between its committees. They ensure that safeguarding policy and practice meet requirements.
 - A close eye is kept on the performance of pupils. Governors are aware that standards need to be higher and they challenge the school to raise achievement.
 - Governors are vigilant in checking the appraisal of the headteacher and staff, and its connection with pay. The management of finance and building matters is effective in securing the best possible resources within its budget. The effectiveness of the spending of the grant for pupils known to be eligible for additional funding through pupil premium is not evaluated rigorously enough.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	107433
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	425757

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Manisha Govan
Headteacher	Christine Nuttall
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2012
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