

Inspection of a good school: Rucstall Primary School

Holbein Close, Black Dam, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 3EX

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

Outcome

Rucstall Primary School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at Rucstall Primary School. Staff care for pupils very well, getting to know their individual interests and personalities. The school's values, including celebration, perseverance and respectfulness, are a deeply embedded part of school life. Pupils understand them well and demonstrate them through their behaviours.

Pupils say that this is a school where you can make friends easily and people are kind to each other. In the playground, pupils are encouraged to be physically active and play well together. Some act as 'play leaders' and take responsibility for organising games and looking after equipment. Bullying is extremely rare, but leaders deal with any incidents quickly and effectively. Pupils feel safe in school and trust adults to help them if they have a problem.

Pupils achieve exceptionally well here in a full range of subjects, living up to the high expectations of their teachers. They enjoy remembering what they have learned before and showing others what they know. One parent reflected the views of many when they said, 'Our children have learned quickly at the school and are still pushed to take on new challenges by their teachers.'

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are determined that every child should benefit from the exceptional personal development offer at Rucstall Primary School. They are successful in this aim, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils enjoy an enormous range of opportunities to develop their talents or acquire new ones. The extra-curricular activities on offer reflect the

diverse interests of the pupils, from karate and hockey to cookery and crafts. In addition, leaders ensure that all pupils have a variety of memorable experiences during their time at school. These include events such as visiting the theatre or going to the beach. Many pupils develop their leadership skills by taking on positions of responsibility. Some are house captains, while others champion equalities or help to run the school library. These roles help to create a community where everyone plays their part and feels empowered to make a difference.

Teachers have high expectations of all pupils. This is no different for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who receive highly effective support. The school's curriculum has been extremely well designed to make sure that pupils improve in each subject, one step at a time. This work begins in the early years, where activities are carefully structured to ensure that pupils learn very well in all of the key areas. Through every key stage, teachers deliver the curriculum with impressive consistency and expertise. They are clear and precise in their teaching. They check systematically that pupils are learning what they need to know to move on. When they spot gaps or misconceptions, teachers quickly adapt their lessons to address these.

Pupils make exceptional progress in their reading. Teachers are highly trained, so lessons are delivered with accuracy and pace. This means that pupils get lots of opportunities in class to practise what they know and become more confident. This continues in the books they take home, which are closely matched to their ability. If pupils fall behind in their reading, this is identified quickly, and effective support is put in place to help them catch up. Leaders' determination that every pupil should learn to read is clear. Before children even arrive, in Reception, leaders work with them and their families, including visiting nurseries.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They make every effort to be polite and courteous to each other, as well as adults. In lessons, pupils focus well, and it is very rare for misbehaviour to disrupt their learning. Pupils are taught explicitly about how to recognise and manage their emotions. This work is extremely effective and empowers pupils to talk about their feelings and ask for advice if they need it.

Staff appreciate the way that leaders are highly considerate of their workload. Every member of staff has an adult they can talk to if required. There is a strongly collegiate approach, where everyone helps each other. Teachers benefit from dedicated time to work together on the curriculum or develop their subject knowledge, which they say is invaluable.

Governors are systematic in checking that the information they are given by leaders matches what is happening in school. They triangulate carefully and have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and continuing development. They are very mindful of staff well-being and assure themselves that all staff feel well supported, including leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a priority here. Staff are well trained to identify concerns and pass these on as appropriate. When required, leaders act swiftly and appropriately to put in place additional support for pupils and their families. This includes working with external agencies and the local authority. Leaders ensure that the necessary checks are carried out on new staff. Governors understand their safeguarding duties and check that the school continues to have effective systems in place. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe in school as part of personal, social, health and economic education, but also through a dedicated safety curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	116040
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10256443
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Robinson
Headteacher	Ruth Griffiths
Website	www.rucstall.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 and 4 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are new to the school since the last inspection. There have also been many changes to the composition of the governing body.
- The school does not currently use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This is the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior staff, including the school's headteacher, deputy headteacher and special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector also looked at examples of curriculum planning and pupil work in art, geography, science and design and technology.
- The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority. He spoke with representatives of the local governing body about their roles.
- The inspector met with pupils, parents and staff about their views of the school, as well as taking into account their responses to Ofsted's questionnaires.
- The inspector checked that the arrangements for safeguarding are effective. He met with the designated safeguarding lead, scrutinised records of concerns, checked the single central record and had conversations with pupils, staff and governors about this aspect of the school.

Inspection team

Chris Ellison, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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