

Inspection of The Russell School

Brushwood Drive, Chorleywood, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 5RR

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils learn and play together cheerfully. They are thoroughly motivated and interested in lessons and benefit from a wealth of extra-curricular activities that enrich their learning. The school has high expectations that every pupil has a successful and happy experience of school. They ensure that pupils thrive academically and socially. Staff know each pupil well, understand pupils' individual needs, and provide support to enable all pupils to achieve highly.

Pupils reflect the values displayed on the school's shields, having high expectations of each other and themselves to be kind and respectful. Pupils' care and consideration for others is nurtured from the earliest stages. Each pupil composes their own written mantra that helps inspire them to fulfil their ambitions. Pupils routinely take responsibility for managing their own behaviour. If reminders are ever needed to improve behaviour, any issues are soon resolved. Pupils are safe in school.

Pupils speak enthusiastically about their participation in a wide range of clubs and events. The school provides opportunities for all pupils to pursue their talents and find new interests across a variety of disciplines, including music, sports, art, drama and cookery. Pupils gain much from taking on responsibilities such as house captains, eco-squad and play leaders.

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

The school's curriculum is well established, providing pupils with high-quality education across a broad range of subjects. From the early years onwards, the school sets out precisely the knowledge and skills pupils will be taught. Pupils' consistently high achievement in reading, writing and mathematics enhances their learning across the curriculum. They learn well in all subjects.

Leaders prioritise staff training so that all are clear on the expected approaches to the delivery of the curriculum. Consistent routines in lessons ensure that pupils recall and consolidate prior learning and rapidly move on to more complex ideas. Teachers draw on their strong subject knowledge to skilfully deepen pupils' learning and use of technical terminology. Staff appreciate greatly the support and guidance they receive from leaders, including steps taken to help with workload and well-being.

The programme for the teaching of early reading is firmly embedded. In early years, children learn to read from the earliest opportunity. Highly competent staff ensure that children rapidly become familiar with and practise their use of phonics, developing fluency and their use of vocabulary. Throughout the school, there is a strong promotion of pupils' love of reading. Special events, such as visiting authors, trips to the local library and bookshops, and daily routines, including using the popular reading garden at playtimes, encourage pupils' great enthusiasm for reading. In conversations with inspectors, some of the youngest children joyfully shared accounts of their chosen reading books.

In the early years, children rapidly settle into the expected routines. Children in the Reception class concentrate closely on adult-led and independent tasks, interacting purposefully as they learn and develop new skills and knowledge. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning are sustained throughout the school. Pupils attend well. The school promptly follows up absences and provides guidance and support for individual pupils and their families to help improve attendance.

The school is highly ambitious for all pupils. It ensures that systems are in place to identify any pupil who is falling behind in their learning. For example, the school has very well organised routines for regular checking of pupils' learning of early reading. The school matches staff expertise to the specific areas in which pupils need extra help. It provides tailored support to enable them to catch up quickly. Staff are vigilant to any indication of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff use well-chosen resources and effective strategies to enable pupils with SEND to access the same curriculum and achieve as highly as others.

The school's programmes for the teaching of personal, social and health education and relationships and sex education are very well organised. Pupils receive age-appropriate guidance on how to keep themselves safe and stay healthy. The curriculum develops pupils' understanding and respect for differences between people, including those of different faiths and cultures.

There are carefully chosen educational trips to enrich pupils' learning across different subjects. Year 4 pupils delight in their experience of a residential trip to a historical location which brings to life their studies of the Tudor period. A range of initiatives broaden pupils' experiences and help them to make positive contributions to the school and wider community. Pupils proudly speak about Enterprise Week, which boosts their work-related skills, budgeting and teamwork while working on fundraising projects. Leaders, including the governing body, prioritise checking that all pupils benefit from the wide range of opportunities on offer at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	117098
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10294955
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Amit Oza
Headteacher	Claire Pitt
Website	www.russell.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 November 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors has been appointed.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with school leaders and representatives of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. An inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, computing, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils’ interests first.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents, staff and pupils in responses to Ofsted’s online surveys and in conversations with parents at the school gate.

Inspection team

Amanda Fraser, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Ann Bowen-Breslin

Ofsted Inspector

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