

# Rucstall Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116040
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	312158
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Pritiben Patel

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 on roll</b>	
School	216
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Terry Tillman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Monica Barker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 September 2003
<b>School address</b>	Holbein Close Black Dam Basingstoke RG21 3EX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01256 466524
<b>Fax number</b>	01256 475108

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The vast majority of pupils who attend Rucstall Primary are of White British origin and a small minority come from other backgrounds. A small percentage of pupils speak other than English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need is in line with the national picture. A new headteacher has been in post since January 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Rucstall is a satisfactory and improving school with particular strengths in the personal development of the pupils. The over-whelming majority of parents are very happy with the school. A comment made by one parent was typical of many, 'Rucstall has a fantastic sense of community,' and inspectors agree, because Rucstall is a school where everybody is included and pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils are very happy, confident, thoroughly enjoy school and behave very well.

The leadership of the headteacher is strong. She provides clear direction and vision, knows what needs to be done, and has put effective plans in place. As a result, standards in English improved, at the end of Key Stage 2, in national tests in 2007. This is because writing skills are now taught through a range of topics that provide interesting contexts that engage the pupils. Support from the local authority and a focused programme of teacher development have also had a marked impact. The success in raising standards in English demonstrates the good capacity of the staff team, working together, to bring further improvement.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily and attain broadly average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. The school's tracking information shows there are pockets of good progress particularly in the Foundation Stage and at upper Key Stage 2. Standards in mathematics are not as high as those in English because the teaching of mathematics has not yet received the support and attention that has been focused on English.

Pastoral care for pupils is a strong feature of the school's work and is exemplified in the comment made by a parent, 'The confidence my son developed at Rucstall came from the nurturing nature of all the staff'. Pupils are very well looked after. Teachers and their assistants provide good support for pupils with specific needs and as a result, they make good progress. Academic guidance is still developing and not all pupils are clear about what they need to do next to improve their work. Marking although regular, does not always inform pupils of their next steps in learning.

Although inspectors observed some good lessons, there is currently not enough good teaching to ensure pupils make consistently good progress throughout school. There are good relationships between staff and pupils. Interactive whiteboards are used well to engage pupils. Lesson aims are clear, and consequently pupils know what is expected of them. However, more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.

The good curriculum contributes well to raising pupils' confidence and self-esteem. A range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors have a very positive impact on pupils' enjoyment and personal development.

The school has developed good links with outside agencies in order to meet the individual needs of pupils, as well as with a local secondary school as part of its plans to raise the attainment of more able pupils and standards in mathematics.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enter school with skills, knowledge and attitudes lower than those usually found amongst four-year-olds. Good quality teaching, well organised resources and a rich range of activities, ensure children make good progress by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children

are happy, confident and fully involved in all that is going on. A variety of interesting indoor and outdoor experiences, together with opportunities to contribute to the planning of their own work, are enjoyed by the children. Stimulating counting activities, based on real life situations such as organising a party, improve the children's mathematical development. The skilled teaching of letter sounds and opportunities to handle and share books successfully develop the children's language and communication skills. Skilled staff ensure that the children work and play in a safe environment. Children work co-operatively with others, learning from their mistakes and negotiating roles when undertaking group tasks.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve standards in mathematics by making more effective use of assessment and creating opportunities for pupils to use the skills they are taught throughout the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that there is more good teaching throughout school.
- Ensure that more able pupils are sufficiently challenged in all lessons.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Progress across the school is inconsistent. In the Foundation Stage pupils make good progress, as they do in Years 5 and 6. However, in other years the rate of progress is satisfactory and not as rapid as it should be. The school realises that there is a need for improvement because standards are not yet good enough, and too few pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain the higher levels.

The school's performance in the national tests at the end of Year 2 and 6 is broadly average. Preliminary results for 2007 in English have improved and show that the school's focus on writing has had a positive impact. Standards in mathematics however have declined and the school did not meet its target. Effective steps have been put into place to address this, such as more training, improved links with specialist teachers at a local secondary school as well as checking pupils' understanding of mathematical questions.

Pupils with specific needs achieve well and make good progress due to the high level of effective support they receive.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils' outstanding spiritual development was demonstrated when they made badges reflecting their beliefs and other pupils questioned them about their thoughts and ideas. Inspectors saw outstanding enjoyment and pride when pupils received certificates in whole school assembly for both personal and academic achievements. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to demonstrate responsibility by participating in the school council, running the tuck shop or becoming Playground Co-ordinators or Playground Patrollers. They also contribute very well to the local community through fund raising events and participating in Christmas and musical productions for parents. Pupils' adoption of healthy

lifestyles is outstanding as they drink water throughout the school day, participate in a wide range of after school clubs and make healthy food choices at playtimes and lunchtimes. Pupils are very aware of how to keep themselves safe. They are adequately prepared for the next stage of their schooling as demonstrated by their satisfactory achievement.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall although inspectors also saw good teaching. Good relationships between teachers and pupils and effective classroom management underpin many lessons. The pupils are eager to learn and know exactly what is expected of them because the teachers set out their intentions clearly. Often teachers make learning fun, giving pupils opportunities for discussion, drama, using the outside environment or by making relevant links between subjects.

On occasions pupils are passive for long periods of time and discussions are too long, reducing the time available for pupils to practise the skills they have been taught. Furthermore, tasks are not always challenging enough for more able pupils.

In most classes, assistants work closely with the teacher and support the learning well. However, in a minority of classes their role is underdeveloped. Nevertheless, pupils with specific needs receive good support, enabling them to achieve well.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is organised through topics to ensure that pupils' learning is relevant and set in an interesting context. Some year groups are contributing their ideas to the planning of topics and this is helping to increase pupils' enthusiasm and motivation for their work. Teaching literacy skills through different topics to add purpose to pupils' writing, has been a priority for the school and has helped to lift standards in English. A similar range of opportunities is not yet available in mathematics as pupils do not readily practise their skills throughout the curriculum. Music and art are strong features of the curriculum and contribute well to pupils' creative development. A range of visits, such as a Year 6 residential trip and visits to activity centres have a very positive impact on pupils' personal development and social skills. A parent stated, 'After school clubs are excellent!' and inspectors agree. A range of clubs such as chess, cookery and choir are thoroughly enjoyed by pupils. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are taught through topics as well as in separate lessons. Inspectors saw a wide range of work where pupils had effectively used ICT to draw pictures, write stories and reports. The progress pupils make in developing their ICT skills is systematically tracked. A range of additional programmes help pupils with specific needs to make good progress.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of pastoral care and support is outstanding and makes a very significant contribution to the pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. This view is shared by parents, who speak of the 'fantastic atmosphere' of the school. They are 'proud and impressed,' by the behaviour of pupils and overwhelmingly agree that their children are well cared for, safe and

secure. Child protection procedures are securely in place and arrangements for health and safety are robust.

Academic support is inconsistent across the school. Teachers' marking in English provides detailed and helpful pointers for improvement and is linked to improvement targets for pupils. However, in mathematics this is at the early stages of development. There are systems for monitoring pupils' progress in English and mathematics but these systems need to be more regular, to ensure that all pupils make sufficient progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has done much to improve staff morale and teachers' understanding of assessment particularly in writing. This has had a marked impact on standards in English in a relatively short time. The headteacher is currently focusing on improving the attainment of more able pupils and raising standards in mathematics. However, it is too early to measure the impact of these developments.

The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. Leaders were over ambitious in their evaluation although they had identified appropriate and accurate priorities to develop the school further. Challenging targets are set based on pupils' progress information.

The headteacher monitors teaching and learning throughout school. The mathematics and science managers have not yet had this opportunity, although plans are in place for this to happen. Pupils' progress is linked to the performance management of teachers and this is helping to increase the accountability of all staff.

Governors' contribution to school improvement is good. They are very experienced, well informed and committed to the school. They provide good support and offer appropriate challenge to the headteacher.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Rucstall Primary School, Basingstoke, RG21 3EX

On behalf of the inspectors, I would like to thank you very much for being helpful when we came to visit your school. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at all your work.

You go to a satisfactory and improving school with strengths. Here are the reasons why:

- your personal development is outstanding. You have very positive attitudes and really enjoy school
- you make satisfactory progress and reach broadly average standards because you have satisfactory teaching in the main and sometimes good teaching
- those of you who have specific needs make good progress because of the good support you receive from teachers and other adults
- you have a good curriculum and really enjoy all the extra activities such as chess and multi-sports
- all of the adults in your school make sure that you are safe, happy and well looked after
- the governors know your school well and provide good support and challenge
- the headteacher, deputy and teachers are working hard to improve your school further.

We have asked them to improve standards in mathematics. You should have more good teaching in your school and those of you who are capable should receive harder work in lessons. I am sure you are ready for the challenge!

With best wishes for your future success,

Pritiben Patel

(Lead Inspector)