

Russell Hall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107433
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	324571
Inspection dates	27–28 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Carmen Markham

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	261
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr K Jenkinson
Headteacher	Mr M Ford
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	West End Queensbury Bradford West Yorkshire BD13 2AW
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average school takes pupils from an area with broadly average social and economic indicators. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is just above the national average. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little below the national average. The school has the capacity to admit 65 children part time from the age of three years into their Early Years Foundation Stage but half these children transfer at the end of Nursery to the Reception classes in their local schools. The school has been awarded Artsmark Gold and Activemark. Wrap around care and an after-school club are provided on school premises. They are subject to a separate inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. The long-serving headteacher and stable staff have created a very happy school that is much valued by the community it serves. Many members of the local community are involved in a full range of enrichment activities and work in the school on a voluntary basis. Since the previous inspection the school has worked hard to improve the achievement of its pupils and the success of these efforts are clearly visible in the above average standards pupils attain by the end of Year 6. This demonstrates its good capacity to improve.

Standards have risen in the last three years as a result of initiatives to improve performance, particularly in writing. Key Stage 1 quickly demonstrated the impact of this work but it has taken longer for the improved standards to work through to Key Stage 2. Overall standards are significantly above the national average in Key Stage 1 and above average in Key Stage 2. An above average proportion of pupils attain the higher levels in English and mathematics. However, there are fewer higher levels in science because pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their skills of investigation. As pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills broadly in line with the those typical for their age and attain above average standards by the end of Year 6, their achievement is good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as their needs are quickly identified and effective support is put in place for them.

Leadership and management are good. The senior leadership team and governors, inspired by the able headteacher, have successfully developed their role in recent years to enable them to meet the growing expectations of school management. They have done this very effectively while maintaining the exciting enrichment curriculum that has inspired boys to achieve and provided strong and valuable links with the local community. Their evaluation of the school's performance and needs is very accurate and good initiatives have led to significant improvement in recent years. Challenging targets and good use of resources have made a strong contribution to rising standards. This is well supported by effective staff training and the reorganisation of staff that enables a teaching assistant, referred to as a teaching partner, to be based in each class. The school provides good value for money.

The quality of teaching is good as teachers plan and deliver lessons effectively so that pupils achieve well. Teachers make good use of information about pupils' performance to check that they are making good progress. Pupils are well cared for and are increasingly well supported by assessment and personal target-setting. Parents are very positive about the quality of teaching and the help, support and care their children receive from teachers. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good overall but Reception children have restricted access to the outdoor area because of the limitations of the building.

Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well and enjoy school. Pupils know how to stay healthy and enjoy the excellent sporting activities provided by the school. By Year 6, pupils are effective members of the school community and the world beyond school. However, pupils have insufficient access to, and experience of, communities that are socially and culturally different from their own.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with skills broadly in line with those typical for their age in most areas of learning. Consistently good teaching ensures that children make good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage so that by the time they leave Reception the skills of some children exceed the expectations for their age. Their achievement is good. Children behave well, form good relationships with adults and other children and enjoy their time at school. Parents comment on how well they settle in and gain confidence. They show consideration for each other and are keen to please, responding well to praise and the special rewards they receive. Their personal, social and emotional development is good.

Leadership and management are good. Staff provide a very safe environment where children are well cared for and parents are valued as partners in their child's learning. The school's parent involvement worker provides good support to parents to help them to contribute effectively to their children's progress. The progress of pupils is carefully monitored; information is used to plan activities and to identify children's needs. There is a stimulating and well planned curriculum and a good range of activities to engage children's interest and curiosity. However, sometimes there are so many options that it can be difficult for staff to make sure all the children are positively engaged. A consistent approach to developing language skills helps all children learn letters and sounds and gives children a solid start with reading. Able children are very well provided for in their literacy sessions. Mathematical development is also a strength of the provision. The outdoor activity area does not fully meet the needs of all children because it is awkward for Reception children to access.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase opportunities for investigative work in science to enable pupils to attain the higher grades.
- Pursue all possible and practical ways of providing continuous outdoor learning for children in Reception.
- Ensure that all pupils have opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of culture and diversity within and beyond their own community.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards throughout school are above average and achievement is good. Since 2006, overall standards in Key Stage 1 have been significantly above average. Standards in Key Stage 2 have been more variable over the same period but are currently securely above average in English, mathematics and science. Good quality school data and lesson observations indicate that work to raise Key Stage 2 standards has been successful and achievement is good and improving. In both key stages, above average proportions of pupils reach the higher National Curriculum levels except in science in Key Stage 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, as their needs are effectively met. Initiatives to improve the achievement of boys have been so successful that until recently they performed better than girls. However, the school has addressed this issue and both groups now achieve equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy sharing their successes with others and readily participate in all aspects of school life. They respect each other and work together well in class. The discussion group around the theme of 'giving', for example, prompted pupils to recognise that 'the story taught us about kindness, friendship and respect for one another'. Older pupils support their younger counterparts in the playground and in class where they help them with reading. Membership of the school council and acting as 'jobbers' and 'buddies' are just three examples of the many responsibilities which pupils accept willingly to help run the school. Pupils have a keen social conscience, supporting a range of local, national and global charities such as The Gambian Trust. Nevertheless, their appreciation of other cultures is only limited. Pupils are fully aware of the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise and are able to articulate how to keep safe. Attendance is broadly average. Good achievement in their academic subjects means that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education and for their economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Warm working relationships between staff and pupils contribute significantly to the good progress made by pupils in most lessons. Pupils do their best, respond to teachers' high expectations and behave well. In all classes thorough planning takes account of the range of pupils' learning needs. Good use is made of resources. For example, information and communication technology (ICT) enables pupils to research ideas and visualise unknown experiences. In most lessons pupils are independent learners and the teacher works effectively in partnership with the teaching partner to support the brisk pace of learning. In the few lessons where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, the pace is slower and pupils are occasionally distracted from their learning. Learning is based on thorough and accurate assessments which, coupled with the good use of targets, help pupils to understand how to improve their work. However, the quality of marking of pupils' work is inconsistent across subjects and classes. It usually provides detailed advice on how pupils can improve their standards but sometimes there is little more than a comment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs, interests and aspirations of pupils. Pupils' personal, social and health education is a strong feature of the curriculum and, as a result, pupils' self-esteem and confidence in what they can achieve are increasing. There is an appropriate emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy which has led to recent improvements in the quality of writing throughout the school. However, insufficient investigative work in science limits the number of pupils who attain the higher levels. A very good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, including games and sport, are popular and well attended by pupils. Music plays an important part in the life of the school with the school's Bearfootin soul band having an enviable reputation in the local community. A variety of interesting educational visits are enjoyed not only by pupils, but by their family members who accompany them.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The talented and hardworking team of support staff, including teaching partners and the newly appointed parent involvement worker, provides good quality pastoral support, not only for pupils but also for families, particularly those new to the area. Good use is made of the support provided by outside agencies. Transition arrangements to high school are praised by parents. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified rapidly and there is a good range of support sessions to meet their needs. Pupils who join the school are also given good support to help them to settle in. The school is making valiant efforts to promote good attendance. Child protection and safeguarding systems are in place and fully meet current government requirements. Academic guidance is continually improving and teachers now monitor the progress of their pupils with much more accuracy. As a result, pupils are very well aware of their current performance and also of their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The governors and the leadership and management team have a clear vision for a happy community school that provides a broad curriculum and supports the achievement of all. The school knows its strengths and areas for development well and sets about ensuring improvement through its improvement and management plan. The two areas that were identified for improvement in the last inspection report have been tackled effectively. Standards have risen, particularly in writing, and ICT is rapidly improving. This reflects effective teamwork and the skilled contribution of subject managers. Challenging but realistic targets have been set to secure improvement. However, some action plans lack detail and timescales. This can prevent several initiatives being managed at the same time. Occasionally, too much time elapses between identification of an issue to be addressed and it being tackled. Leaders have worked hard and successfully to enable all pupils to access the curriculum and to eliminate discrimination. Links with the local area and the community of schools are very good but less has been done to enable pupils to have opportunities to work with pupils from a range of different communities.

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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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Russell Hall Primary School, Bradford, BD13 2AW

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for making us so welcome in your school. I admired the interesting displays around the school, including the collection of world flags and newspaper reports that showed your success in many events, especially sport. The Year 6 work on graffiti art, inspired by a Belgian artist, was particularly impressive. The inspection team also really enjoyed your music making, especially the Bearfootin soul band. It seemed that the school was always full of music and singing.

I think that your headteacher and the staff all work hard to make your school successful. I judge it to be a good and improving school. It is much valued by everyone in your local area. Staff look after you well and you feel safe and happy in school. You make progress in lessons because your teachers plan them carefully so you have work that suits you. Teachers also make sure that they involve you in a lot of interesting topics, activities and visits so you are inspired to learn and excited by your experiences.

Most, but not all, of you attend school regularly and arrive on time. You behave well and so you are able to listen and learn. I noticed that you take good care of each other so that you can all enjoy school. You also know how to stay healthy and safe and make the most of all the exciting activities the school provides during and after school. Your sport mascot, Russell Bear, is obviously bringing you a lot of sporting success as you win a lot of competitions!

One of the reasons for my visit was to see how your school can improve. Although most of you are making good progress, the number of pupils attaining the higher levels in science is too low. I have asked your teachers to increase opportunities for investigative work in science to help more of you to attain the higher levels. Children in Reception do not have enough opportunities for learning in the outdoor area so I have asked the school to find ways of providing more outdoor learning for these children. Finally, I have asked the headteacher to organise opportunities for you all to learn about, and experience, modern life in areas that are very different to Queensbury.