

Inspection of a good school: Russell Street School

Russell Street, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK11 1BT

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 March 2022

Outcome

Russell Street 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 section 5 inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to Russell Street School. From the minute they start school, they flourish. Children in the early years get off to the best possible start. The new early years learning space is welcoming and vibrant. It provides children with opportunities to learn vital skills and knowledge.

Pupils think that bullying does not happen in their school. Some children make mistakes, but pupils know adults will help sort any problems quickly. Pupils enjoy playing outside. They love sitting on the friendship bench.

Well-being is a priority of the school. Pupils, staff and families are proud to belong to this school. One parent, typical of many said, 'My child is absolutely thriving at this school.'

Pupils learn to be 'stars' through the school values. They learn how to be 'safe', work 'together', 'achieve', become 'resilient' and learn that they are 'special'. These values weave through all aspects of school life. Community life is very important to the school. Trips have been hindered because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, staff provide many opportunities to take children on trips and pupils spoke passionately about these visits. Despite the pandemic, children have recently visited local businesses and the town library.

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

Leaders, governors and staff are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum is a strength of the school. Leaders build their curriculum from nursery and take into account end points beyond the scope of this school. They have collaborated with junior and secondary schools to

understand how learning here prepares pupils for adulthood. Pupils succeed because of the caring attitudes and dedication of the whole school community.

Detailed curriculum thinking enables teachers to deliver lessons of a high quality. The curriculum skilfully breaks down learning into small parts. New knowledge builds on what has already been learned. Staff regularly check pupils' understanding of their work with precise use of assessment. This means that staff know if a pupil needs extra support to keep up. Carefully targeted intervention helps pupils catch up quickly. More able pupils think deeply about their work. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND make significant progress, learning and remembering more. Pupils with SEND thrive by learning alongside their peers in the classroom, but have individualised plans when necessary.

Teachers skilfully deliver the curriculum. They have very strong subject knowledge. This is as a result of the high-quality training they receive. Teachers start each lesson with a recap of previous learning. This helps pupils remember crucial information. Mathematics teaching is systematic. Children in early years develop confidence and mathematical fluency. Carefully structured activities deepen their understanding of numbers and shapes. In art, children use the rich outdoor environment for observational drawing. They learn how to shade and draw texture. By Year 2, they carefully apply their skills to produce intricate designs based on the work of William Morris. Lessons in all subjects are engaging.

Reading underpins all learning. It is a focus of the school. Reading is at the centre of every classroom, and vibrant displays make reading appealing to pupils. Leaders have ensured that staff are experts in teaching phonics. They deliver lessons in a systematic way. Children begin to learn to read the minute they join nursery. Children love their daily 'book talk'. Daily story time is a joy. Staff make all reading activities highly engaging. The books that pupils read are matched to the sounds pupils know. Staff check pupils' learning of phonics regularly. Older pupils read widely and confidently. Fluency and expression are encouraged right from the start.

Behaviour is exemplary. The youngest children learn how to share and co-operate. Older pupils work effectively with their learning partners. Staff set high expectations for behaviour, so pupils behave very well in lessons. They concentrate hard and are enthusiastic learners. Pupils have a strong moral sense, they know right from wrong.

Pupils learn about personal, social and health education through the school's own programme called 'iSafe'. Pupils know how to be healthy and eat a balanced diet. Through 'iSafe' and assemblies, pupils develop a clear understanding of what it means to live in modern Britain. Clubs are popular, for example reading club before school and Irish dancing after school.

Governors provide excellent support and challenge for leaders and staff in the school. They are thoughtful in their approach. Staff are proud to work here and really appreciate the consideration given to well-being and workload. Staff said they feel 'invigorated' by the positive changes leaders have brought to the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a deeply embedded culture of safeguarding. Leaders, including governors, are meticulous in the way they ensure that children are safe. All staff know how to identify concerns and the importance of reporting them quickly. Leaders follow up any concerns in a timely and considered way. The school has strong links with other agencies and provides appropriate support to children and their families.

The 'iSafe' curriculum includes lessons that teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, including online. From an early age, pupils feel safe. They all have five trusted adults that they can talk to, remembered on their 'hand of trust'.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 23 January 2012.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	110252
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10207096
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Naomi Sumpter
Headteacher	Dawn Robinson
Website	www.russell-street-school.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been changes to staffing and governance. This includes the appointment of a new headteacher and chair of governors.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and art. 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 heard pupils read.
- The inspector considered the curriculum, visited other lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work in science, geography and history.

- The inspector held meetings with senior leaders of the school, members of staff, pupils and parents. The inspector also met with Governors and spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector reviewed a wide range of safeguarding documents and records, including the school's record of recruitment checks. The inspector also talked to a range of parents, staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspector spoke with staff, pupils and parents to gather their views. They considered 74 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 41 free text comments. Inspectors also took account of 12 responses to the staff survey and 56 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Linda Culling, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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