

# Russell Street Infant School

## Inspection report

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|                                |                    |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 110252             |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Milton Keynes      |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 378069             |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 23–24 January 2012 |
| <b>Lead inspector</b>          | Peter Sudworth     |

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>                      | Infant   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3–7 years  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 237  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Ross Dilnot  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Sandra Lewis   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 8–9 December 2008  |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Russell Street<br>Stony Stratford<br>Milton Keynes<br>MK11 1BT |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01908 563148   |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01908 267378   |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | Russellstreet.school@Milton-Keynes.gov.uk                      |

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|---------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Age group</b>          | 3–7                |
| <b>Inspection date(s)</b> | 23–24 January 2012 |
| <b>Inspection number</b>  | 378069             |



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Peter Sudworth

Additional inspector

Verna Plummer

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons, had discussions with pupils, staff and two governors, listened to pupils read and examined pupils' work. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at various documents, such as those relating to safeguarding and progress. The inspectors read the parents' and carers' comments on the 73 questionnaires returned and also staff responses.

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized infant school with eight classes, including the two part-time Nursery classes. Children commence the Nursery in the September following their third birthday, with any vacant places being taken up in January. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The vast majority of pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of disabled pupils and of those who have special educational needs is lower than in most schools. The school manages its own breakfast club. The school has Healthy Schools status, the International Award and ICT award. Two of the seven class teachers were on maternity leave at the time of the inspection.

## Inspection judgements

|                                       |          |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>          | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Achievement of pupils</b>          | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Quality of teaching</b>            | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Leadership and management</b>      | <b>2</b> |

## Key findings

- This is a good school.
- Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school and would recommend it to others. Their children enjoy their education. As one parent writes, 'My daughter skips to school every morning and returns home full of chatter about what she has learned.'
- Good teaching enables the pupils to achieve well. There is a high degree of consistency in the approaches to learning. Consequently, pupils make good progress and reach above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. They develop good communication skills which support their writing and reading skills effectively.
- The school is led and managed well and has improved significantly since it was last inspected.
- The staff take good care of the pupils and are consistent in their expectations of behaviour. The pupils have a good understanding of safety and behave well.
- The curriculum is thoughtfully planned, with good links between subjects. Pupils develop good learning skills by working practically. The extensive use of outdoor learning provides the pupils with memorable experiences. International links are well established.
- The school provides well for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The school is well staffed so that these pupils receive the help that they need, which facilitates their good progress.
- Pupils are not always sufficiently knowledgeable about aspects of using books, such as the purposes of the blurb and illustrations, and they have limited knowledge of different authors.
- Although provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good, opportunities are missed in assemblies to enhance pupils' spiritual development.
- Teachers know pupils well through the good use of assessment and the pupils' progress is tracked carefully.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to be partners in their children's education, and they respond well.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Widen pupils' knowledge of books by:
  - extending pupils' taste for and familiarity with different authors
  - ensuring that pupils know the important features about books, such as how to use illustrations for clues.
- Increase the spiritual element in assemblies through more frequent opportunities to sing and to reflect more deeply about the theme.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Attainment on entry is around that expected for the children's age. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and reach standards above those expected for their age at the end of Reception Year. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics have been rising consistently for the last three years and have been above average. Parents and carers, rightly, feel that their children make good progress.

The children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where some outstanding teaching was seen. A good variety of practical activities promotes the children's learning well. The children's knowledge and vocabulary are enhanced significantly through the staff working alongside the children. In the Nursery, a group of children put on hard hats in the 'construction site', as did the teacher, while the children worked to build a house out of blocks from their own designs. Reception-Year children learned about the terracotta army in their studies of the Chinese New Year, which contributed well to their cultural development, knowledge and understanding. They were taught to think about and to ask meaningful questions about it by beginning with the words 'I would like to know...'

The staff's good attention throughout the school to the teaching of letter sounds and blends (phonics) promotes the pupils' early reading and writing skills well. When meeting unknown words, pupils use this knowledge confidently to build up words. They develop good strategies to go back if what they read does not make sense. However, pupils do not yet have a wide enough knowledge about different authors from their independent reading, nor do pupils always know about important aspects of using and learning from books, such as the blurb and the clues that can be obtained from illustrations.

Pupils use computers well in their learning to research and also to record responses in phonics sessions. Throughout the school, they deploy their speaking and listening skills effectively in different subjects and negotiate their views and answers in paired talk. A good example was when Year 2 pupils worked practically with equipment to design a simple circuit. The following day, they used this knowledge and, in small groups, formulated precise instructions for making one. They trialled the circuits on

younger pupils to see if they worked and so were able to know how successful their instructions were.

Pupils who have difficulties in learning make good progress because close attention is paid to their specific needs, including individual programmes in both reading and mathematics. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language progress well because of the plentiful opportunities for speaking and listening and the practical approaches.

### **Quality of teaching**

Staff prepare lessons well, matching the work well to pupils' different needs. They use learning resources effectively to assist the pupils' understanding. Teachers' good knowledge of the content they teach enables them to pose questions effectively and also to answer pupils' questions fully. Visual approaches, through the good use of interactive whiteboards, help to secure the children's interests and speed up the flow of lessons.

Staff provide welcoming, interesting and attractive classroom environments which support learning well. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff plan a wide range of activities for the outdoor area, which enhance different aspects of the children's development, including interesting opportunities for the pupils' physical development. Throughout the school, lessons are usually well paced, making good use of time. Active learning helps the pupils to remember key skills. For example, pupils make signs with their arms when learning letter sounds and position their arms across their bodies to demonstrate the correct sign for subtraction. Year 2 pupils designed and made their own boats from different materials. They discovered which materials were waterproof and those that sank.

Throughout the school, staff have good strategies to manage behaviour. The skilled planning of opportunities for speaking and listening, including role play, keeps the pupils focused. In one class, the pupils worked successfully as a group, using a microphone and video camera, to report on a fire related to their history studies. Teachers use paired talk regularly to support the pupils' speaking and listening skills effectively and also their social development through negotiating ideas. Marking is helpful and supports the next steps in pupils' learning. Staff keep good records of pupils' progress. Video clips of the younger pupils record important stages of learning successfully.

The impact of the taught curriculum is good and communication skills are developed well through the teaching approach. Teaching of basic skills is good, applied across the curriculum, and contributes to the pupils' good progress, including their skills when using computers, which has resulted in the school's 'ICT Mark'. Teachers share a range of literature with pupils and sometimes base learning on it. The well-chosen texts contribute well to pupils' moral and cultural development.

Teaching assistants are deployed well. Extra teaching expertise for pupils who have difficulties in reading and mathematics is well utilised and helps specific pupils catch up. Learning intentions are shared well and staff are consistent in ensuring that the

pupils know how to be successful in their tasks. Often, pupils contribute effectively to the process and suggest extra pointers for success before they begin an activity. Parents' and carers' views that teaching is good are confirmed by the inspection.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils have a positive attitude to learning and get along well together. They enjoy school and attendance is above average. Pupils respond well to the teachers' high expectations of behaviour. They want to learn. They know about 'unkind words' and 'unkind hands' and understand the appropriateness of their actions. They remind one another about these simple rules. They hold doors open for one another to prevent them swinging back and they remind one another 'not to run so fast'. Conduct around school and in class is most often good because of the care shown to pupils and the children know how they should behave. There is no evidence of any kind of bullying.

The school has a positive ethos, with respectful relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils show a good ability to assess and manage risks and to keep themselves safe. They know that they must be careful with knives, for example when they are cooking in school, and to take care when putting cakes into a hot oven. They are also aware of computer safety and that they must not access unknown sites or talk to strangers. They acquire well-developed social skills and a concern for others. The school promotes good behaviour through praise, celebration and rewards. Parents and carers say that behaviour is good. Their children report that they all, generally, get on well together. The pupils have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles and this is shown in the Healthy Schools status. Pupils display good behaviour at the breakfast club.

### **Leadership and management**

Good leadership and a focus on the correct priorities have resulted in significant improvement since the last inspection. The whole-school commitment to do the best for the pupils is clearly evident in the strength of relationships and the staff's dedication to their work. The governing body brings a wide range of skills to its planning and members take specific responsibilities. It challenges and asks questions. Governors' visits to school keep them fully aware of the school's development. School self-evaluation is accurate. The school development plan focuses clearly on raising standards even further. The rising results, the significant improvement since the last inspection, the commitment of staff and governing body, together with the clear vision, indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve.

The curriculum is well planned, with a good focus on key areas of learning. Different subjects are integrated together in a natural way. A good example is the way the pupils' study of explorers in history in Year 2 was linked effectively to science and design and technology. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs. Pupils benefit from sporting opportunities which support their healthy lifestyles. The good use of the local environment enables the pupils to learn at first hand, such as work in the school's own science garden and orchard and the good use Year 1 pupils make of

local woodlands. These activities assist the acquisition of pupils' knowledge and support their understanding well. The pupils' moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly, although aspects of pupils' spiritual development are not as strong as they might be. International links are a strong feature of the school's philosophy. The school has drawn successfully on ideas from visits to schools abroad. For example, it has re-organised lunchtime arrangements so they develop pupils' social skills more successfully.

Safeguarding arrangements are secure. Child protection arrangements fulfil requirements. The school provides a safe environment for the pupils. Staff provide equal opportunities in the activities that are provided and there is no evidence of discrimination. The breakfast club is well managed.



## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

| Grade   | Judgement    | Description  |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding  | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.  |
| Grade 2 | Good         | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.  |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.  |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate   | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

### Overall effectiveness of schools

| Type of school       | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) |      |              |            |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
|                      | Outstanding   | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools      | 46  | 46   | 8            | 0          |
| Primary schools      | 8   | 47   | 40           | 5          |
| Secondary schools    | 14  | 38   | 40           | 8          |
| Special schools      | 28  | 48   | 20           | 4          |
| Pupil referral units | 15  | 50   | 29           | 5          |
| All schools          | 11  | 46   | 38           | 6          |

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement:               | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.   |
| Attainment:                | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.  |
| Attendance                 | the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.   |
| Behaviour                  | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.   |
| Capacity to improve:       | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.                    |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.                            |
| Learning:                  | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.  |
| Overall effectiveness:     | inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.  |
| Progress:                  | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |
| Safety                     | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.             |

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



25 January 2012

Dear Pupils,

**Inspection of Russell Street Infant School, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes  
MK11 1BT**

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school, for talking to us about what you do and also for sharing your work with us. We enjoyed our visit very much. You do lots of interesting things and you clearly enjoy school a great deal. We found you to be well behaved and polite. Your parents and carers are pleased that you attend Russell Street Infant School. You attend a good school, which has improved a lot since the last inspection three years ago. This is because of the hard work that has been put in by the headteacher, the staff and governing body. Your progress has quickened and now you reach a standard in your reading, writing and mathematics which is better than we see usually.

We have just two things that we have asked the school to improve at this time. The first is to encourage you to read books by different authors and to know how to use books better. You can help in this by reading at home and school as often as you can. This should also help your spelling and give you ideas for writing. The other thing that we have asked the school to do is to improve the assemblies. We would like you to have more opportunities to share in the assembly through singing and having more time to think about the assembly theme.

We hope that your school will go on improving and with your help it can do so. We would like to thank you once again for all your help. We hope that you carry on working hard and doing your very best.

All good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Peter Sudworth  
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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