

Inspection of Russells Hall Primary School

Overfield Road, Russells Hall Estate, Dudley, West Midlands DY1 2NX

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 April 2025

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils live and breathe Russell Hall's values. Pupils and staff 'learn together to be the best that we can be'. Leaders are committed to raising ambition, aspirations and to providing opportunities to succeed. In the recent past, pupils have not achieved as well as they might in published outcomes. However, improvements in the quality of teaching are beginning to have a positive impact on standards.

The school is calm and orderly. Pupils behave well. They know exactly what staff expect of them. Positive relationships lie at the heart of managing behaviour. Pupils trust adults to help with any problems that might arise. They have confidence that staff would help them to solve any problems. This helps pupils to feel safe.

The school puts pupils' personal development at the front and centre of its work. Pupils have a voice in school. They enjoy taking on a range of leadership roles, for example in the school parliament and as ambassadors. This helps them to develop a strong sense of responsibility. They wear their school badges with pride. The curriculum promotes many experiences beyond the classroom, such as performing in rock bands, visits to museums and training with the local police force. These experiences help to develop pupils' skills, confidence and aspirations.

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

The school ensures that pupils learn a broad range of subjects. Leaders have made reading, writing and mathematics a priority. While the school's published outcomes do not match national averages, pupils make strong progress through the curriculum from their starting points. This is having a positive impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding.

The recently revised curriculum is ambitious. As part of this work, the school has identified the important knowledge that pupils need to learn. This is carefully sequenced so they can build on prior learning. For example, in languages, pupils develop a secure understanding of the gender of nouns to allow them to build simple sentences by the end of Year 6.

Reading is front and centre of the curriculum. Staff have received effective phonics training. The phonics programme builds pupils' knowledge well over time. Staff swiftly identify anyone falling behind and provide effective support. Those at the early stages of learning to read have books matched to the sounds they know. As a result, pupils are taught to read well.

The school has developed clear strategies for identifying and checking on the work of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders ensure that staff receive helpful information about how to meet these pupils' needs. Staff use this information effectively. For instance, they carefully design extra support to help these pupils achieve well.

In some subjects, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise the most important things they are learning. For example, while pupils learn about grammatical features in English, they sometimes move on to new ideas before they have secured this understanding. This limits pupils' ability to link new learning to what they already know.

Children get off to a good start in Reception, are well supported and settle quickly at school. The curriculum prioritises their language and communication skills. Many children successfully learn to control their feelings and emotions, waiting for their turn to share and listening to the ideas of others. They develop positive relationships with each other and staff. Children are happy and secure because routines are well established and expectations are high.

Attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils know the expectations for behaviour and follow these well. The school works hard to encourage pupils to attend and identifies barriers they may face. However, some do not attend school regularly enough. This means they miss important learning and the wider experiences the school provides.

Pupils benefit from a range of school clubs and share their love of music by singing in the local community. They take on roles and responsibilities, including playground buddies and as part of the school parliament. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online. They learn about changes to their bodies as they grow up and how to lead healthy lifestyles. Pupils know that faiths and beliefs may be different to their own and understand the importance of treating everyone equally and with respect. The school takes every opportunity to celebrate pupils' successes. As a result, they are proud to be part of this caring and nurturing school.

Governors are well informed and are committed to providing the right balance of challenge and support. As a result, their work is effective. The school provides all staff with a well-considered training and coaching programme. They are proud to work at this school. Leaders consider the well-being of staff and reduces workload wherever possible.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of the curriculum, pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to practise what they are learning. This limits their ability to remember content and to link their new knowledge to wider ideas. The school should ensure that pupils are given regular opportunities to practice important ideas and concepts.
- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This means that they do not benefit from the school's curriculum, which limits their progress and achievement. The

school should continue to work with families to ensure that all groups of pupils attend well so that they can full benefit from the curriculum and achieve as well as they should.

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	103813
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10378203
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	418
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Saima Naz
Headteacher	Alison Harrison
Website	www.russellshall.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school operates a before- and after-school club.

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

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, English, history and music. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, the designated safeguarding lead and the leader responsible for early years.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the archdiocese.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils formally and informally at various points in the inspection to gather general information about school life. They took account of responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the online staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors spoke informally with parents on arrival to school.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans, records of governance, and documentation relating to attendance and pupils' behaviour.
- 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.

Inspection team

Su Plant, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gill Turner	Ofsted Inspector
Diana Pearce	Ofsted Inspector

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