



# Russell Scott Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 106206  
**Local Authority** Tameside  
**Inspection number** 287442  
**Inspection date** 18 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Suzi Clipson-Boyles HMI

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 address</b>	Clare Street
<b>School category</b>	Community		Denton, Manchester
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11		Lancashire M34 3LQ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 3205186
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	396	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 3208834
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Clr M Wareing
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr S Marsland
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 March 2001		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This town centre primary school is larger than average. Children are taught in single age groups and a purpose-built Foundation Stage Unit provides places for Nursery and Reception. The children come from a wide range of socio-economic areas including some with recognised social deprivation. The proportion entitled to free school meals is higher than the national average. All children speak English as their first language, and the majority are of White British heritage. The percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), including those with statements of special educational need, is higher than in most schools. A breakfast club and after-school club provide additional care for around 60 children. Despite some development of the school buildings some classes still operate in classrooms that are far too small.

## 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 school and some aspects of its work are outstanding. The environment feels inclusive and secure. From the moment you arrive there is something interesting to look at, with children's work and photographs of activities covering every available surface, encouraging children to do well and celebrating their successes. As you walk around the school, very well-behaved children are absorbed in their learning. Stimulating resources are capturing their interest in every classroom: for example, interactive whiteboards provide challenges and explanations alongside more traditional resources such as puzzles and games. The school is like one big happy family and people are busy everywhere. Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding.

This atmosphere of purposeful and enjoyable education and care can be attributed to the headteacher's enthusiastic leadership. He and his strong team of dedicated staff have introduced a major range of innovations in recent years. These have resulted in high quality provision for children which has led to improved attendance, improved behaviour and improved achievement. However, the school's improvement plans are too broad and initiatives do not necessarily focus on weaker areas of current performance.

There is highly effective teaching, learning and care at Russell Scott School. From Nursery onwards all children are taught well both how to learn and how to behave. This good teaching continues right through the school so children make good progress overall, but progress at Key Stage 1 is slower than in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2. Many children start Nursery from very low levels but, by the time they finish in Year 6, test results and children's work seen by inspectors show that standards are broadly in line with national averages. A key strength of the school is the way that it helps the many children who are behind to catch up. Children with LDD also make good progress due to the well-planned support. However, more able children throughout the school could be reaching higher standards.

An outstanding curriculum means that children enjoy coming to school and want to learn. Provision in the Foundation Stage is excellent. Attendance has improved considerably in recent years and has now reached satisfactory levels. Children receive good care, guidance and support. They feel safe from bullying and racism. Serious incidents such as bullying and racism are rare. They have a good understanding of how to behave in safe ways and their behaviour reflects this. They also know about, and make, healthy choices. They had eaten all the fruit at lunchtime during the inspection! The wide range of sports during and after school encourages children to participate in activities that help them stay fit and the uptake of these is high. Community links are strong in the school. Opportunities to learn from other adults such as local business people and professionals help children to understand much about the wider world. They are proud to take on extra responsibilities and they willingly make a positive contribution to school and also to the wider community, for example singing in the town and raising money for charity. These skills all play an important part in securing the children's future economic well-being.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the rates of progress in Key Stage 1.
- Ensure that sufficient challenge is provided for more able children throughout the school.
- Reduce the number of new initiatives on the school improvement plan so that priorities for improvement are more sharply focused on areas of weaker performance.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children make good progress overall in this school. At the start of the Foundation Stage standards are extremely low. Very many children have not reached the first stages of the early years curriculum. By the end of Year 6 standards are in line with the national averages. The rates of progress vary at different key stages. During the two years in Foundation Stage children immediately start to catch up at an excellent rate with the result that, by the end of Reception, they are just below the national expectations for their age. There has been a decline in standards over the last three years in Key Stage 1. The school has recognised this and changes made to the teaching and curriculum have already led to visible improvements. Progress in Key Stage 1 is now satisfactory, but children remain below the national averages by the end of Year 2. As children continue to move up through the school their progress speeds up again. This means that by the time they finish school, many are no longer behind. The school works hard to ensure that different groups of learners make good progress. Children who start school with low levels of attainment and also children with LDD, make very good progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. All children learn how to behave sensibly and safely. As a result there is a calm and orderly atmosphere throughout the school. Children have very positive attitudes to learning. They work very cooperatively with each other and are kind and caring. At lunchtimes they talk sociably with each other while eating. They are quick to help others if they see a problem in the playground. They help one another with their work. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Children from minority ethnic backgrounds are valued and children enjoy learning new things from each other about different cultures. This promotes a happy and inclusive atmosphere and contributes to the low rate of serious incidents. Children develop confidence and a strong belief in themselves because the school encourages them in such positive ways. The school's learning mentor works effectively with children and their parents to improve behaviour and attendance. This has had a positive impact on a significant number of children. Attendance overall in the school has improved considerably although it is still only satisfactory.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The teaching is good throughout the school and is sometimes outstanding. A team of efficient support staff also contributes significantly to learning. Children make good progress and are very enthusiastic about learning because the teachers make it interesting and fun. Lessons are carefully planned and take account of children's interests, for example a real bicycle in one classroom provided a good real-life stimulus for writing. There is a buzzing atmosphere in classrooms because teachers use a wide range of resources to help children learn. This maintains their interest and leads to good concentration. Information and communication technology is used very effectively to develop children's skills. One Year 5 boy playing a challenging computer card game adding decimals commented, 'It's well cool and really helps us learn!' Work is tailored to meet the needs of different learners. Children with LDD and children who are behind with learning have particularly good support and make good progress. However, teachers' planning does not always provide enough challenge for some of the more able children. Teacher assessment is accurate and thorough, but children do not have enough opportunities to evaluate their own work. Behaviour is well-managed during lessons using high expectations, clear rules and much praise and encouragement. During the last three years teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 have been negatively affected by a curriculum that has been too formal, small classrooms and insufficient challenge for some groups of learners. Planned changes were introduced in September to address the fall in standards and these are starting to have a positive impact on learning. However, the size of the classrooms remains a concern. In the Foundation Stage teaching and learning are outstanding. Children are able to choose from a range of exciting activities indoors and outdoors. This is balanced against more structured group sessions with staff who build on every possible opportunity to extend children's learning.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum. The introduction of more creativity into learning by linking subjects together is already having a huge impact. For example, Year 1 children were thoroughly enjoying their topic on cats, as they carefully observed soft toys to create high quality art work on computers. Children say that the many visits out of school help them to remember what they are learning. One Year 3 child commented, 'We knew what Egyptian mummies were, but when we saw them at the Bolton museum we really understood what they were like then.' Residential trips also give excellent opportunities for children to learn a wider range of skills including social skills. Visitors are often invited into school to talk about different aspects of their work. Local firemen made a memorable impression on younger children, who told the inspector knowledgeably about why it is dangerous to play with matches. Such contacts with the world of work also give children good preparation for their future lives.

Education for health and safety is skilfully woven into the curriculum in ways that are meaningful to children. The vibrant curriculum in the Foundation Stage is reflected all around the unit. It gives children an excellent start to their time in school by teaching them that learning can be fun. A wide selection of lunch and after school activities are well-attended and add to children's enthusiasm for learning and fitness levels through sport.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. Staff are highly committed to ensuring that children are safe and successful. The school provides clear arrangements for safeguarding and closely monitor children's welfare and academic progress. As a result, children succeed well and love coming to school because of the way they are treated and cared for. Children that may be at risk are identified early. They and their families receive good support. The learning mentor makes a significant contribution as demonstrated by the record of successes of children with whom she has worked. Children receive good support with their learning, although they have insufficient opportunities for assessing their work to help them understand what they need to improve next.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good with outstanding features. The creative leadership style of the headteacher has resulted in an abundance of exciting new initiatives over recent years resulting in recognition such as winning last year's BECTA Award for digital music. As a result the school is positively buzzing when you walk around. This has a positive impact on the children because they clearly enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. Their results show that this leads to good progress. The headteacher is extremely well-supported by his deputy headteacher who manages well-organised systems resulting in highly efficient running of the school. This includes close monitoring of all groups of learners so that children make good progress. However, tracking children's progress through Key Stage 1 is not as detailed or effective as in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2. The team of staff are highly dedicated. Teachers monitor the curriculum closely across all subjects and are constantly looking to improve. For example, the school has been awarded the Arts Mark Silver Award and music is a strength as the result of good middle leadership. Governors provide good support and challenge for the school and the well-managed budget provides good value for money. The school's close work with the community extends beyond that of many schools and relationships with parents, local businesses, sports clubs and agencies such as Connexions are excellent. This contributes significantly to raising the aspirations of the children - they believe they can succeed and they do succeed. Support for the school by parents is overwhelmingly positive.

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## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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

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

Thank you very much for your warm welcome during my recent visit to inspect your school. From the moment I arrived I was very impressed with what I saw. I agree with Mr Marsland that Russell Scott is a good school, and some things are outstanding!

Mr Marsland is a very good headteacher who has introduced lots of new and exciting ideas. This means that coming to school is really good fun for you all. He and the teachers work very hard to help you learn and make sure you feel safe. They plan lessons that are interesting so that you listen well and want to work hard. Sometimes they take you out to places like the Bolton museum and Styal Mill which adds even more to your learning. You are excellent at science at Russell Scott and your results are better than many other schools. Lots of you catch up with your English and maths very well. This is important because it will help you get jobs when you are older. However, some of you are capable of doing work that stretches you more.

The Foundation Stage Unit is excellent because the younger children learn so quickly. They enjoy coming to Nursery and Reception because the activities are so interesting and the adults help them so well. We think your behaviour is excellent. You tell us there is no racism or bullying in your school and we noticed how kind and caring you are towards one another. You enjoy learning from each other, especially about different cultures and religions. You also have excellent attitudes towards your learning and you know a lot about how to stay safe and healthy. The extra clubs you go to at lunchtime and after school give you lots of extra interesting things to learn.

I have asked Mr Marsland and the teachers to focus on a smaller number of new projects. This will help them concentrate on the most important improvements before the inspectors come again. It also means that the new and exciting things making Russell Scott primary school so special will be given time to grow strong roots.

I hope that you will continue to work and behave as well as you are so that the school keeps on getting even better! I send my very best wishes to you all for a happy and successful future.