

Radford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122435
Local Authority	Nottingham City
Inspection number	359248
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Richard Marsden

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Clark
Headteacher	Jacqueline Smith
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed eight teachers in 12 lessons, spoke with parents and carers and held meetings with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at safeguarding documentation, attendance records, information on pupils' attainment and progress, the curriculum, the school's self-evaluation and planning, as well as questionnaires from 17 staff, 105 pupils and 62 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Given that pupils did not take national tests in 2010, are teachers' own assessments of pupils' attainment and progress accurate and reliable, and how good is pupils' progress?
- Given the change of leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are recent improvements being sustained?
- Have the recommendations made at the last inspection to increase the level of challenge offered by the governing body and to match pupils' work more closely to their capabilities been implemented?

Information about the school

The school is similar in size to that of the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is more than double the national average. Approximately four out of five pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and approximately half the pupils speak English as an additional language. These proportions are both more than three times higher than those found nationally. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national level. Approximately one third of pupils join or leave the school part-way through a year. Children join the Reception class from a range of nurseries.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2008, and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader is newly in post in the current year.

The school operates a breakfast club attended by approximately 20 pupils each day. The school holds the National Healthy Schools Gold Award, and the International Schools Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It provides a good education for its pupils. They join with attainment which is well-below expectations for their age but they progress well. By the time they leave, they reach broadly average levels in mathematics and reading. Pupils do not reach the national average in writing, however, and the proportions reaching the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics are low. This means that their overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is still low. The gap between their attainment and the national average narrows considerably as a result of good teaching as they move up the school. The many pupils who join the school with little or no English receive high levels of support and, in many cases, make exceptionally rapid progress, particularly in speaking, reading and mathematics.

The level of care, guidance and support for pupils is outstanding. Pupils are very well supported when they first join the school, and are very well prepared so that they can move on to their next school with confidence. The school offers vigorous and persistent support to pupils and families facing difficult circumstances. Parents and carers told inspectors how the school has helped families in times of crisis, or how their child had made outstanding progress when joining the school after difficulties elsewhere. In showing care and support, teachers do not lower their expectations of pupils: these remain high at all times.

Pupils confidently state that they feel totally safe at school. They know about road safety and internet safety. The school takes its safeguarding duties very seriously. The quality of record keeping and the meticulous way in which the school reviews and continually seeks to refine its work in this area are examples of best practice.

The school esteems the cultures and backgrounds of all its pupils. In this very diverse community, all pupils are given an equal opportunity to thrive. The school monitors and evaluates its performance in this regard very carefully, and goes to great lengths to ensure that no pupil is denied access to anything the school offers. The raising of aspirations and the building of confidence in pupils are strengths of the school.

The school is a harmonious and cohesive community and pupils are proud to belong to it and to serve it in various ways. They also involve themselves in community events such as the Radford Carnival hosted by the school. However, the school recognises that more can be done in this regard and that the school can play a greater part in promoting community cohesion locally and further afield.

Assessments for older pupils are accurate and reliable but there is inaccuracy in the assessment of children's capabilities when they join the Reception class and when they leave it. This has clouded the school's judgement about the progress they make in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where it has not been as good as in the rest of the school.

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The new Early Years Foundation Stage leader has identified this and has begun to take steps to redress it.

There have been notable improvements since the last inspection, particularly in behaviour, the use teachers make of assessment information to identify pupils needing help, and the excellent progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school has very effectively addressed the areas for improvement raised at the last inspection. Inspectors, therefore, judge that the school has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills so that the gap between attainment in reading and writing is closed
 - moving more pupils to the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics so that attainment in these subjects overtakes national averages by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Accelerate children's progress in the Reception class by strengthening collaboration with nurseries, so that the assessments of children entering the Reception class are more reliable and can be more effectively used to provide activities which match children's capabilities.
- Strengthen the school's contribution to community cohesion by providing more opportunities for pupils to become involved directly in the local community and with contrasting communities further afield.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The high proportions of pupils who join or leave the school part way through a key stage mean that data on the progress of past pupils do not tell the whole story in this rapidly improving school. The work of current pupils, including those who join the school part way through a key stage, those known to be eligible for free school meals, and those from minority ethnic groups as well as those of White British heritage, shows good progress from their low starting points. In the lessons observed, pupils were attentive and purposefully occupied in a wide variety of tasks. In one lively Spanish lesson, for example, the teacher made good use of visual aids and insisted that pupils used no English as they talked about them. In a fast-paced literacy lesson, pupils corrected each other's work in small groups and became very keen to make improvements to their work as they did so. They, therefore, progressed well. Pupils who join the school with little or no English are very well supported and make exceptionally rapid progress, developing their speaking, reading and mathematical skills, and attaining the same standards as other pupils in mathematics and reading by the end of Key Stage 2. In the classroom, as well as in their own small groups, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive high levels of support to enable them to develop their literacy skills. The school identifies carefully the support each individual needs, whether in speaking skills, handwriting, or any other aspect of learning, and provides support accordingly. Consequently they progress as well as other pupils.

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Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. They know how to stay fit and healthy and they willingly take on responsibilities to serve, for example, as playground buddies or monitors. The school council makes and implements decisions on behalf of pupils, who are regularly asked for their views about such things as the curriculum. Pupils suggest how they might support various charities, and arrange events themselves to raise money. Good behaviour makes a major contribution to effective learning.

Although attainment in core subjects is low, overall, it is higher than average in information and communication technology. Pupils frequently work in teams and pairs, develop problem-solving skills and relate their learning to the real-life world. Attendance rates are improving, thanks to the persistence with which the school pursues absentees and the support it gives to families facing challenging circumstances. Pupils' workplace skills are, thus, developing satisfactorily.

Pupils from different backgrounds get on well with one another. They listen with interest and courtesy to people with different views from their own and they respect each other's needs and interests. They reflect on values and resolve conflicts sensibly.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers' expectations are high. Teaching is good overall, some of it outstanding. Teachers provide lots of pair and group activities, use information and communication

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technology well and break lessons into short, manageable tasks, so that pupils do not have to sit and listen to the teacher for too long. Teachers plan well to ensure that the needs of individuals are effectively met. Teaching assistants are proactive in seeking ways to promote pupils' progress. They keep meticulous records and track pupils' progress very well. They are instrumental in ensuring the exceptional progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language, immersing these pupils in English and giving them high levels of challenge. Pupils' work is marked regularly and conscientiously, and feedback from teachers shows them clearly how well they are doing and how to improve.

The curriculum is vibrant and lively. It provides a broad and balanced range of subjects which includes clarinet or guitar lessons for all Key Stage 2 pupils, and swimming and Spanish for every pupil. Learning Spanish is particularly popular, as it puts pupils who speak English as an additional language on an equal footing with other pupils. Pupils respond well to regular themed weeks, such as, 'enterprise', 'black history' and 'science', and they enjoy a wide range of visiting speakers and visits, which include three residential stays for all pupils. There is wide take-up for after-school and lunchtime clubs and teams. The breakfast club is greatly appreciated by the families whose children use it.

The school has well-established routines and expectations which are well understood, and pupils presenting challenging behaviour are very effectively managed so that they do not disrupt others. Pupils say that teachers deal swiftly and appropriately with any rare instances of bullying. The school goes to exceptional lengths to support pupils and ensure their well-being, particularly any facing hardship or challenging circumstances. It can point to notable successes in enabling pupils to progress well who have been at risk of failure.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is very highly regarded. With the support of the deputy head and leadership team, she has communicated high expectations and ambitions to staff. They work as an effective team. Teaching is rigorously monitored through lesson observations, reviews of pupils' work and subject reviews. Staff support and challenge one another well as they strive to improve outcomes for pupils. Teaching assistants and mentors are fully involved in decision-making and training and this has led to rapid improvements in the learning of the pupils whom they support.

The governing body are well informed and, as directed at the last inspection, now offer good challenge as well as support to shape the strategic direction of the school.

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Parents and carers speak in glowing terms of the way in which the school engages them and enables them to support their children. They say how the school welcomes their views and acts upon their concerns. Parents' and carers' activities, such as confidence-building classes, help to draw adults in, who otherwise might not engage with the school.

The school has very productive links with a wide range of partners to improve its provision and promote the well-being of pupils. Partnerships with universities and local businesses, for example, have been instrumental in broadening pupils' horizons and raising their aspirations.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The school assesses children's skills and understanding as well below age-related expectations when they join the Reception class. Their progress is satisfactory in all areas of learning, although their levels by the end of the Reception year are lower in communication, language and literacy than in the other areas of learning. Children who speak English as an additional language make good progress because of the support they receive. Behaviour is good because expectations are high and routines are made clear. Children interact pleasantly with adults and with each other, taking turns, playing sensibly, showing courtesy and willingly taking on little jobs.

The Early Years Foundation Stage area is well equipped indoors, although the outdoor area is still in need of further development. In particular, it lacks resources to develop children's literacy. There is a good balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities. The latter help children to develop independence and confidence.

Resources are used well and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader and teaching assistants observe and record children's progress both formally and informally, building up

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a picture of each child. They are aware of the need to refine this process, however, and to work more closely with nurseries so that assessment information can be used more effectively to match work to children's needs from the outset and, thus, speed up their learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Responses to the questionnaires show very high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the school. Parents and carers particularly like the way it keeps their children safe, the way the school is led and managed, takes account of their suggestions and concerns and keeps them informed about their child's progress.

These findings reflect the lengths to which the school goes to ensure that parents and carers engage with its work and feel supported as they, in turn, support their child's learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Radford Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 207 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	60	24	39	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	76	14	23	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	40	65	21	34	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	53	28	45	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	60	22	35	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	58	24	39	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	47	31	50	2	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	34	55	23	37	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	55	26	42	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	60	23	37	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	63	21	34	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	42	68	18	29	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	68	20	32	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



3 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Radford Primary School, Nottingham, NG7 3FL

I'd like to say 'thank you' to everyone for the very warm welcome you gave to us when we visited your school. This is what we found.

You make good progress in lessons, and the standard of your work has improved very much, although it is still below that found in most schools.

Your teachers look after you very well, make sure that everyone feels safe, and that no one misses out on anything the school has to offer.

Your parents and carers are pleased with the way your school helps them support you.

Your behaviour is good; this helps you to learn and to make good progress.

You particularly enjoy visits and other out-of-school activities.

We have suggested to your teachers that they should aim for you to reach higher standards, particularly in writing, and to help children in the Reception class to make better progress. We have asked your school to give you more opportunities to meet people from other communities in Britain and abroad, so that you can get to know them and learn from each other.

It was a great pleasure to visit your school. You can all play your part in improving it by continuing to behave well and always trying your best.

Yours sincerely

Richard Marsden

Lead inspector

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