

Radcliffe Hall Church of England/Methodist Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105330
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	355758
Inspection dates	8–9 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Kathleen McArthur

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	289
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Eileen Jones
Headteacher	Rev Denise Luke
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons taught by 13 teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff and a representative from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at safeguarding procedures, analysed documents including plans for improvement, policies and data on pupils' progress and scrutinised pupils' books. Questionnaires from pupils, staff and the 67 received from parents and carers were analysed.

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

- The procedures that ensure pupils are kept safe in school.
- The impact of strategies to raise pupils' attainment in English and mathematics.
- The extent to which teaching has improved since the last inspection.
- The effectiveness of measures introduced by leaders and managers to secure the capacity for ongoing improvement.

Information about the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. While most pupils are White British, an increasing number are of Asian heritage. About ten different languages are represented in the school and a few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is twice that found nationally. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school holds Healthy School status, and provides breakfast and after-school clubs. Since the previous inspection there has been significant staffing disruption and a new headteacher took up post in January 2011.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably

be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' attainment and achievement in English and mathematics, and the quality and consistency of teaching.

From starting points well below those typical for their age, children make a good start to their education and progress well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In Key Stage 1, pupils also progress well, although many find it hard initially to change from the practical curriculum that they enjoyed in the Nursery and Reception classes. Pupils' progress stalls in lower Key Stage 2 and they underachieve, so by the time they leave the school, attainment is low and achievement is inadequate. As a result of this inconsistency in progress made by different groups of pupils, the promotion of equality of opportunity is inadequate.

The overall quality of teaching is inadequate; despite some good practice for older pupils that greatly accelerates progress in Year 6. Throughout the school, teaching is not sufficiently strong or consistent to ensure that pupils make enough progress and attain as well as they should. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Assessment information is not used precisely to plan challenging tasks for every ability group and the quality of marking and feedback which pupils receive about their work is too variable. In some classrooms the learning environment is uninspiring. There is no handwriting scheme, too much written work shows limited vocabulary and pupils' work contains too many spelling errors. Decisive actions to improve teaching and overcome underperformance are however beginning to have an impact. Attainment in mathematics is rising, although pupils find it hard to tackle mathematical problems. Well-organised, targeted support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language enables them to make satisfactory progress.

Comments such as, 'teachers are really helpful and kind', 'it's a good place to be', show that pupils feel very safe and enjoy school, and the large majority of those parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire agree. Behaviour is satisfactory, pupils cooperate well with each other and staff, and the school is a happy, harmonious community. Pupils value the activities that enrich the curriculum, especially sport and the choir, and older pupils are excited about their forthcoming residential visit. Pastoral care is strong, particularly for pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.

Improvement since the last inspection has been hindered by disruption to staffing. The new headteacher and deputy headteacher are providing strong direction. Working closely

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with members of the governing body and the local authority, leaders have swiftly implemented an ambitious vision for improvement, based on thorough, searching self-evaluation. Sharply-targeted plans and strategies to boost progress and raise attainment are already showing signs of success. Attainment in mathematics is rising, there are more resources to support learning, attendance has improved and teaching assistants are deployed more effectively. The governing body is better informed to support and question school leaders. Leaders and managers at all levels are strongly committed, and well aware of the challenging journey ahead to secure and sustain improvements. Consequently, the capacity for improvement is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress to raise pupils' attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - enabling pupils to organise and improve their writing using richer vocabulary and more accurate spelling
 - developing a consistent handwriting and presentation style
 - ensuring a consistent method of calculation is embedded throughout the school
 - developing pupils' ability to understand the language of mathematical problems so that they can use and apply their numeracy skills confidently.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching by:
 - increasing teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving
 - ensuring that assessment information is used to provide tasks that challenge pupils of all abilities
 - improving the quality of marking so pupils know how to improve their work.
- Improve the learning environment in all areas of the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Pupils attend regularly and most say they enjoy school. Staff and pupils relate well to each other. Behaviour is satisfactory and often good in lessons. In several lessons observed, progress was satisfactory because most pupils listen to their teachers and tackle their work willingly. However, in too many lessons pupils become inattentive, they lose interest and their progress slows. Work in pupils' books, together with the school's own data and from national tests, show that, despite accelerated progress in Year 6, achievement over time is inadequate. However, progress is satisfactory for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language because the extra support they receive is closely targeted to their specific needs.

Pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 with attainment close to national expectations by the end of Year 2. However this is not sustained in lower Key Stage 2. Pupils do not build on their knowledge and understanding consistently or rapidly enough in order to raise attainment as quickly as they should. Signs of improvement are evident in mathematics, resulting from a strong focus on boosting staff skills and confidence. However, many pupils do not understand the language of number problems and cannot recall and use number facts quickly and accurately. Pupils'

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reading skills are satisfactory and support work in all subjects. Many older pupils are increasingly able to express themselves clearly, but most of their writing shows a limited vocabulary, poor spelling and is not always organised or presented with care. There is no agreed handwriting style used throughout the school.

Pupils are helpful to their teachers and to each other. They know how to keep themselves safe from dangers posed by traffic, dangerous stretches of water and when using the internet. Bullying is not seen as a significant problem because pupils trust staff to look after them, saying they act 'immediately' to deal with difficulties, but some pupils feel that behaviour could be better. They demonstrate a good understanding of how to care for their health through diet and exercise, pupils say school meals have improved and they enjoy the healthy snacks available each day. Pupils who act at school councillors, 'Playground Pals' and fruit sellers make a good contribution to the school community. Pupils join many local activities through the school's links with the two local churches. They reflect thoughtfully on their values in assemblies and show respect for the different cultures and traditions represented by pupils in school. Through their actions, pupils demonstrate their keen sense of right and wrong. Despite their good personal skills and regular attendance, weak basic skills put pupils at a disadvantage in preparing for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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

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How effective is the provision?

Too much teaching is inadequate and there is not enough good teaching to tackle pupils' long-standing underachievement, accelerate progress and improve attainment. Some good teaching is found, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and for older pupils in both Key Stages. Year 6, pupils say their work gets 'really hard'. Good relationships between staff and pupils are seen in all classes. Teaching assistants are well directed to support specific groups, for example, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those learning English as an additional language. However, there is too much variation in teaching quality. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Assessment information is analysed regularly, but staff do not use it effectively to provide tasks that challenge pupils of different abilities. The quality of marking varies so pupils do not always know how to improve their work and sometimes careless presentation is accepted. Target setting is at an early stage of development and pupils do not always know their own personal targets.

The curriculum is suitably balanced and meets statutory requirements. Pupils enjoy using information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum. Improved resources have helped boost attainment in mathematics but resources are limited in some curriculum areas, including literacy. Staff are developing a topic based approach to link different subjects through themes. For example, the recent 'Big Writing' day based around Radcliffe Tower, a local landmark, linked history, literacy and geography effectively. Pupils enjoy the good selection of visits, visitors and clubs which enrich their learning and personal development. The before- and after-school clubs are well organised, provide healthy snacks and offer a range of activities enjoyed by those who attend.

The school provides a welcoming, caring atmosphere where pupils trust the adults and feel secure. The old buildings are difficult to maintain and not all classrooms provide an inspiring, modern learning environment. Pastoral care is particularly strong in helping pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable to overcome barriers to learning and by supporting families through links with outside agencies. Good contacts between home and school have helped to improve attendance. Sound advice enable pupils to make informed choices about their future, and suitable transition arrangements ensure that pupils move confidently to the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

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How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have successfully boosted staff morale. Leaders and managers at all levels are strongly committed to establishing a climate of sustained improvement although some middle managers do not have sufficient skills to lead improvement in their areas. Raising achievement and attainment by improving the quality of teaching and learning are given the highest priority. Strategies to rigorously monitor the quality of teaching and learning and analyse performance information have swiftly been implemented. Teachers are held increasingly accountable for the progress pupils make. The governing body is supportive, knows what is needed to secure and sustain improvement as seen in its greater involvement in improving the school. It is becoming more rigorous in the way it holds the school to account by finding out for themselves how well the school is doing. Their appointment of the new headteacher and swiftly implemented strategies for improvement demonstrate this.

Good relationships with parents and carers benefit all groups of pupils. They are well informed about their child's progress and offered help to support learning at home. Worthwhile partnerships, particularly with the local authority are effectively supporting actions for improvement by providing professional development and expertise. Activities, such as the sports partnership and volunteer helpers from the churches, provide additional help. Staff share expertise with other schools, for example, strategies to develop pupils' oral skills. Given the inequality in progress of different groups of pupils, especially the weak progress of those pupils in lower Key Stage 2, the promotion of equality of opportunity by the school's leadership is inadequate

Safeguarding arrangements meet all current requirements and staff training in child protection is up-to-date. Senior leaders and the governing body work effectively with health and safety consultants to ensure pupils are safe and secure. The leadership team actively promotes a cohesive community within the school based on its clear understanding of the religious, ethnic and social context in which it operates. Consequently, the school is a harmonious community and pupils are able to demonstrate their understanding of other cultures in the United Kingdom and in other places throughout the world. Outcomes of low attainment and inadequate achievement mean value for money is inadequate.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are well below those expected. Children's language skills are particularly weak. Excellent induction procedures and warm friendly relationships with staff help children settle quickly. Good care and welfare arrangements ensure they feel very safe and secure and ready to learn. They become increasingly independent and enjoy investigating and choosing from all the activities on offer; deciding when to have their daily healthy snack and milk, dressing up and pretending to be colourful birds or butterflies in the jungle area. Good teaching provides a range of activities, well balanced between those led by the adults and those the children choose themselves. Staff are very involved in all activities and join in role play to encourage children to talk about their activities, so that they gain a wider vocabulary and knowledge of letter sounds. Language skills, however, are slow to develop. Children enjoy working outside, and staff ensure that children are suitably dressed so they can go out, whatever the weather. Behaviour is nearly always good, and children soon understand the importance of taking turns, sharing and caring for others.

Good leadership and management have established a strong staff team, all committed to further improve every aspect of the setting. Careful assessments enable staff to plan the next steps to build on children's learning. Consequently, children make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the end of their time in the Reception class, most children are attaining close to the expected levels for their age, and they happily enter Year 1 with positive attitudes to learning.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of questionnaires returned by parents and carers hold positive views on all aspects of the school's work. Views were very positive about the way children are kept safe, enjoy school and are helped to be healthy, and about teaching and leadership. In a few responses, parents and carers felt that unacceptable behaviour is not dealt with effectively, that they are not given enough information about their child's progress and some felt their child's particular needs are not being met. Inspectors investigated these concerns during the inspection. A code of behaviour is in place, which pupils say is fair and they know unacceptable behaviour is not tolerated. Inspection evidence confirms that pupil progress information is shared at meetings with parents and through written reports, and that staff do arrange additional meetings with parents and carers when requested. All other matters are dealt with fully in the main body of the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Radcliffe Hall Church of England/Methodist Controlled 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 67 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 289 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	51	29	43	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	51	32	48	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	31	46	30	45	4	6	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	46	32	48	4	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	57	26	39	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	37	34	51	6	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	49	32	48	1	1	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)	24	36	34	51	5	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	37	35	52	6	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	30	36	54	6	9	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	39	33	49	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	31	46	31	46	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	57	24	36	4	6	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



10 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Radcliffe Hall Church of England/Methodist Controlled Primary School, Radcliffe, M26 2GB

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being polite and friendly. We enjoyed our time with you. We send a special thank you to the pupils who gave up their break time to meet us. It was good to see you busy in class and with activities such as sport with the Bury footballers, playing outside and selling fruit snacks.

I would like to explain the outcomes of the inspection. Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. You told us you enjoy school and feel very safe, and your parents and carers agree. Staff care for you and you know they will help with any problems. However, we found that you are not achieving as well as you should for your age in English and mathematics. This is happening because teaching is not strong enough even though some lessons are challenging and exciting. So we have given your school a 'notice to improve'. This means that other inspectors will visit the school to check how well it is doing.

The school's leaders and managers are working hard to make improvements. The inspectors saw that your attainment in mathematics is rising already, you have much more equipment to use and that your attendance has improved. To ensure that this continues, we have asked the headteacher and governing body to do the following things:

- help you to make faster progress in English and mathematics so that your attainment rises
- make sure that teaching is always the best it can be and all classrooms are bright and well organised to support your learning.

You can all help by working hard, taking care with your writing and spelling and not being afraid to tackle problems in mathematics lessons. Thank you again for your welcome and help. I send you very good wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Kathleen McArthur

Lead Inspector

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