

Radleys Primary School

Kings Road, Rushall, Walsall, WS4 1JJ

Inspection dates 28 February–1 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement is not yet consistently good over time, despite recent rapid progress across the school in all areas and improved results at the end of Key Stage 2 last year.
- Pupils are not consistently able to check their own work to understand where they need to improve, particularly in mathematics.
- There is no performance management for teaching assistants.
- While the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection, it is too soon to see an impact on achievement at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have not made progress in line with pupils nationally in recent years.

The school has the following strengths

- This is a rapidly improving school because raising pupils' attainment and progress is the whole school's number one priority, clearly supported by the strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding of pupils.
- Training and support for all staff are strongly focused on achievement, to increasingly good effect.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are strong throughout the school. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive; they behave well and feel safe. Attendance continues to be above average and pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy their learning and their achievement continues to be good or better.
- The headteacher is a strong presence around the school and is inspiring everyone to aim higher. Through her dynamic leadership she is building an effective and cohesive staff team, who have led the significant improvements in teaching and learning since her arrival.
- New systems for tracking pupils' progress are very effective and enable senior leaders, staff and governors to know about attainment and progress so that achievement is now good, with pupils making much more rapid progress over the last year.
- The school uses the pupil premium funds well. As a result, all pupils who are looked after or known to be eligible for free school meals, make consistently good progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, or part lessons; four of these lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, representatives of the governing body and local authority, and staff, including middle and senior leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the results of the online Parent View responses and also spoke informally with parents.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, governors' minutes, the school's own checks on how well it is doing, achievement data, monitoring records and documents relating to the safeguarding of the children and staff.

Inspection team

John Croghan, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Fiona Robinson

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which in this school is additional funding provided by the government for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average. Four pupils are looked after by the local authority and there are no pupils from service families.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and whose first language is not English is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage there is one Nursery and one Reception class.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that a greater percentage is good or outstanding by:-
 - ensuring that teachers consistently use marking and feedback to show pupils how to improve their work
 - ensuring that in all classes, work is well matched to the pupils' earlier learning
 - giving pupils the chance to respond to teachers' comments and checking to see that advice has been acted on by use of more short-term planning
 - enabling pupils in all classes to consistently evaluate their own work and that of others, to see for themselves where they need to improve
 - maintaining a better balance between teacher talk and pupil activity
 - giving pupils more opportunities to work independently.
- Using current best practice to continue to raise achievement by:
 - sharing the current good and outstanding teaching in school
 - establishing a shared understanding of what constitutes different levels of achievement by pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics, through more regular moderation of planning and pupils' work.
- Further develop the role of performance management by:-
 - including teaching assistants in a similar manner to that of teachers, so that there is an even greater understanding of pupils' progress and attainment by all classroom staff
 - linking performance management to an increased rate of progress for those pupils who have special learning needs or are disabled.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils requires improvement because for some time pupils have made inadequate progress and their attainment in reading, writing, and mathematics continued to be below that expected for their age in tests in summer 2012, although results at Key Stage 2 moved closer to national levels.
- The new headteacher, with her deputy and other new senior leaders, have made a successful start in tackling this underachievement, and Year 6 results rose last year. Since September she has continued the drive to successfully improve both attainment and progress across the school. This is confirmed by lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work, as well as by the school's own tracking data.
- Attainment at the end of Reception continues to improve and is now above the national figures, with current Reception children on track to do even better. The environment is stimulating and pupils show enjoyment, taking all the opportunities created to show initiative and supported well by all the staff involved.
- Changes in staff and some long-term absence have been managed effectively by senior leaders to minimise their impact on pupils' learning. The achievement of pupils is improving strongly. Weak teaching has been effectively tackled, so that the most teaching seen was good or outstanding. This is recent, however, and not all lost ground has been made up. Some gaps in knowledge, skills and understanding remain and so achievement over time is not good for many pupils.
- All school records and data tracking show rapid and rising progress. These records correctly match the levels of attainment and progress seen in books and lessons, so that in all classes since September the majority of pupils have made at least good or better progress, and in almost all classes attainment is now much nearer to, or exceeding, expected levels, including pupils in Year 6.
- Pupil progress is accelerating in English and mathematics and is now good in lessons as teaching improves across the school. Slow progress in previous years, caused by weaknesses in the quality of teaching, have had an adverse effect on attainment. For example, for pupils in Year 3, despite their good progress this year, attainment is currently no better than average because they made too little progress when they were in Key Stage 1.
- Younger pupils' good phonic skills (the linking of letters and sounds) are evident in the performance by boys and pupil premium pupils in the Year 1 phonics screening check, although girls did not achieve expected levels. Virtually all pupils in Year 2 read simple texts, including new words.
- The progress of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium is consistently good over time and across classes and subjects. Standards reached by looked after pupils and those eligible for free school meals have been steadily improving and the attainment gap between the results of these pupils and other pupils is narrowing in English and mathematics, although attainment is still below that of the other pupils. This progress is improving even more because the school has been able to better use the teaching assistants and other resources to help pupils, through the half-termly (sometimes even more frequent) pupil progress meetings introduced last summer. However, the rate of progress of those pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is slower than that for other groups. Pupils from minority ethnic groups do as well as their peers.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Most teaching seen and the quality of learning were good or better, because teachers plan well and relationships with pupils are strong. This level of good and outstanding teaching in most classrooms has yet to be established over time, but there is evidence that it is already improving the achievement of pupils in all the current classes.

- There are a few common weaknesses in teaching across lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2. Lessons sometimes do not have enough challenge, while in others, pupils are asked to tackle work that is too difficult for them. For example, there was a lack of challenge in a writing lesson where pupils were all working on the same task, with little opportunity for them to make choices about how to organise and present their work. In another mathematics lesson, pupils had too many targets at too high a level.
- In the best lessons seen, teachers used pupils' imaginations well to help them learn through real experiences, as in writing poems about animals who live in tropical rain forests, and in mathematics where pupils had real problems to solve and practical opportunities to test their ideas. Pupils' real thirst for learning was stimulated by most teachers in many of the lessons but these quality experiences need time to raise and sustain good achievement.
- In some lessons, teachers talk for too long, limiting pupils' opportunities to work independently, and sometimes overcomplicating the learning. In more than one lesson pupils were not clear about what they needed to do to be successful at the task set for them. Through this teachers can miss opportunities to demonstrate the key purpose of the lesson or share brief key examples of what a good piece of work looks like.
- The pace of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good. There are stimulating, varied and challenging activities for the children throughout the Reception year. During the inspection, children were learning about dinosaurs and counting their eggs. They were using their knowledge of letters and sounds well to write with the teacher and to write independently. They were making tickets and posters and involved in imaginative drama and creative play.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and most teachers provide comments that help pupils to understand the next steps in their learning and check that pupils respond to their guidance. For example, pupils could show improvement in their writing when the teacher had given them a prompt or question to respond to in order to improve their work. However, this good practice is not seen in all classes or in every subject and pupils are not sufficiently involved in assessing how well they or others have done. The recent introduction of new target cards in mathematics has begun to help pupils understand their progress, but will need time to really influence attainment and progress.
- Teaching assistants usually contribute well to the pupils' learning both in lessons and in sessions where small groups of pupils work exclusively with them. However, the quality of this help can be variable, which contributes to the varying quality of lessons seen and teaching over time.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and contribute well to their current good progress and attainment. They also behave sensibly when in some lessons the teaching does not match their needs. However, their good relationships with all the adults in school nurture mutual respect and understanding.
- Their behaviour around school is very good and they are considerate and support each other throughout their time in school. Older children are good role models for younger children, and they enjoy opportunities to take real responsibility to care and support them, as in the Knights and Castles topic and on the pupil council.
- Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, including e-safety. They say that bullying is rare and that the school always deals well with any worries and so is able to quickly resolve situations. Pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school and are proud of their school council. Pupils clearly enjoy going to school.
- There is awareness amongst pupils of the changes taking place in school, particularly in relation to lessons, and attendance has improved and is now above average. The number of pupils who have been persistently absent has been reduced because of the sensitive care and support given to them and their families.

- Parents recognise and agree that their children feel safe in school and are well looked after. 'My child wants to come to school during the holidays' was a comment that seems to represent the feelings of most parents about the care and support that their children receive.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, supported strongly by her deputy and new senior team, has created positive attitudes and values in this improving school. The large number of staff questionnaires returned to inspectors demonstrated that all staff support the new headteacher and share her ambition to help pupils make better progress.
- Senior leaders are rightly focusing their energy on developing good and better teaching and so sustained good and better achievement is now seen clearly in books and lessons. Staff value the high quality training which is carefully planned by leaders to help them improve their work. The headteacher has acted robustly where weaknesses in teaching have been identified.
- The school is well aware of its strengths and weakness because leaders regularly check how effective the teaching is and how well pupils are doing. The school improvement plan sets out the most important ways that the school can improve pupils' learning. Teachers' planning and pupils' work are examined by leaders but not yet frequently enough.
- The use of pupil premium money has been well organised by governors and school leaders and the outcomes for pupils are very strong, with all pupils eligible for this funding achieving well and closing the gap between themselves and other pupils.
- The school's own checks on how well it is doing are thorough and accurate in its judgements, with strong, clear and appropriate priorities explained, because regular planned and informal monitoring of planning, teaching and pupil performance is now established. A culture of staff understanding of their own and of the school's strengths and weaknesses is clearly part of the school ethos.
- The new rigorous appraisal system, introduced immediately when the new headteacher took up post, has already raised the standard of teaching and has created a team ethic amongst all staff which has contributed greatly to the rapid and rising attainment of pupils. It has not yet been extended to include teaching assistants. The role of the appraiser for new senior leaders is not sufficiently clear.
- The progress meetings held half termly (or more often if required for individual pupil needs) give appropriate, focused, targeted and monitored support that is seen to be raising standards of all abilities of pupils, including pupil premium pupils. The monitoring ensures that the intervention is altered or adapted quickly to ensure success.
- The setting of targets for teachers to improve their teaching is good. All teachers have clear and precise targets which are focused on further improving teaching and achievement. The school links teachers' pay rises through the salary levels to their impact on pupils' achievement.
- The curriculum stimulates and enables literacy and numeracy to be taught through topics that interest pupils. Knights and Castles is an example where Year 5 work alongside Year 1 to help them make castles and helmets. Learning is also made more interesting in a variety of ways, including a range of sporting and cultural activities and visits to places such as London and Winter Wonderland. These, and charity fund-raising activities, contribute very well towards the strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- All pupils benefit from these activities. The emphasis on good behaviour and respect makes sure that discrimination of any sort is not tolerated. However, because the variation in achievement has now been addressed, the school is ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- The local authority has provided an appropriate level of support and challenge to the school. This has included supporting the school in developing more consistently good teaching and arranging support from other schools. The local authority is very confident that the current improvements will be maintained. The school's recent track record also indicates that it is well placed to improve further.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governance of the school is good and governors know effectively about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They successfully get into the school and see it in action. They are aware that communication with parents could be improved. Governors have been a key driving force, alongside the local authority, in supporting leaders with improving standards. They speak confidently and accurately about the quality of teaching, the performance management of teachers and the school's results compared to other schools. This is because they use school data well. Governors have been successful in getting new staff in order to improve standards. The budget is managed efficiently and teachers' pay is linked to their pupils' progress. Effective systems ensure that teachers progress up the pay scale, or are rewarded with responsibility that attracts more pay. The performance management of the headteacher is also managed rigorously. Governors are now clear about how the pupil premium is spent and have checks in place to ensure it is being used methodically. Governors regularly attend training and meet all their statutory duties.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	104207
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	404932

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev. Colin Such
Headteacher	Juli Copley
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 March 2011
Telephone number	01922 721383
Fax number	01922 721383
Email address	jcopley@radleys.walsall.sch.uk

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