

Radford Primary School

Denman Street West, Radford, Nottingham, NG7 3FL

Inspection dates 20–21 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- In recent years, pupils' attainment has been below average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Too much variation in the quality of teaching has meant that pupils' progress, particularly in reading and mathematics, is not consistently good across the school.
- Not enough pupils, including the most able, are achieving their very best because teachers do not always make sure that tasks set are pitched at the right level of difficulty.
- Teachers do not always check to make sure all pupils, particularly disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who do not speak English as their main language, fully understand what they are learning.
- Marking does not always help pupils to improve their work, and they are not routinely encouraged to respond to the guidance provided.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils enjoy coming to school, which they say is 'a happy and safe place'. Attendance has risen and is now above the national average.
- Pupils learn about different cultures and faiths through topics and themes, complemented by a rich variety of trips and visits, which make an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Reception children now benefit from a stimulating, indoor and outdoor learning space. They quickly settle in and make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed. They are polite, well-mannered and often help others. Many take on responsible roles and set a good example for their peers.
- Leaders and governors have introduced several initiatives to improve teaching and to help and support pupils in their learning, and these are already improving standards across the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons, four jointly with the headteacher. They also observed support sessions for pupils at risk of falling behind in their work.
- The inspectors attended one school assembly and visited a workshop for parents about safety on the internet.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in class, and spoke to two groups of pupils and several others informally throughout the inspection. A meeting was held with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and the lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. Inspectors met with school staff, including senior and subject leaders.
- The inspectors noted the views of four parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View survey and spoke to parents and carers who were bringing their children to school.
- The contents of 18 staff questionnaires completed during the inspection were also noted.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's information on pupils' current progress, planning documents, checks carried out by leaders on the school's effectiveness, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors also paid a brief visit to the school's breakfast club.

Inspection team

Aune Turkson-Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Roary Pownall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Radford is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, with around a quarter being of Pakistani heritage. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is also well above average.
- More pupils than seen nationally join or leave partway through the school year.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding provided for pupils in the care of the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the armed forces, is well above the national average.
- The school runs a breakfast club, which is overseen by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils quickly learn new knowledge and skills by making sure that all teachers:
 - set work at the right level of difficulty for all ability groups, particularly the most able pupils
 - check carefully that all pupils, and particularly disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those whose main language is not English, fully understand what they are learning and know what they need to do
 - encourage students to read carefully through marking comments to make corrections, and respond to the advice they are given and improve their subsequent work.
- Raise achievement in reading and mathematics by:
 - developing pupils' understanding of phonics skills so they can apply these confidently in both reading and spelling
 - developing pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics through practical investigations, and reinforcing these skills in other subjects across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities below the levels typically seen for their age, and leave with standards that are below or well below national averages in Year 6. Standards are affected by many pupils joining the school late and with very different starting points, but progress for all groups is held back by inconsistencies in teaching.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 were below average in reading and writing in 2013. Teaching in phonics has not been consistently good enough in the past to raise standards and promote good progress in reading from an early age.
- Year 6 standards in writing rose in 2013, and pupils made good progress. Standards in reading and mathematics were well below average. However, standards are rising and progress is improving. The school has now become much more effective, for example, in identifying pupils' needs early on and is using its additional funding to provide more suitable support sooner, so that pupils can develop their reading skills. This is beginning to have an impact on standards in reading across all years.
- Inconsistencies in teaching over time, and the failure of some teachers to check that pupils know what to do next to improve, have meant progress in some areas has been slow. School information and the work inspected indicate that pupils are now on track to reverse previous dips in results. Achievement is improving in both key stages, with results on track to be much closer to national averages in the 2014 tests.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making overall progress in line with other groups but there is often variation; the progress of some is good but for others, it is insufficient. The pattern of achievement for pupils from minority ethnic groups is similar to that of other pupils, and those who speak English as an additional language make equally variable progress.
- In numeracy, teachers and other adults make good use of new, varied and colourful resources to help pupils learn. Computers are used well to stimulate pupils' interest and this is having a positive impact on raising achievement across the school. There are not yet enough investigation tasks to help pupils practise their problem solving skills and too few opportunities for them to develop these skills in the different subjects they study.
- The school is strongly committed to developing pupils' literacy skills and the promotion of reading across the school has a high profile. All pupils take home a book bag regularly to read to adults and every pupil has a reading buddy in the school. This has raised the profile and enjoyment of reading and contributed to a rise in reading standards. The teaching of phonics (the links between letters and sounds) has improved and pupils are beginning to be much more confident and accurate in their use of these skills, so they are making better progress.
- Writing standards have risen since the previous inspection. Pupils from Reception onwards write with increasing accuracy for a range of purposes, with growing levels of competence and confidence. They are more skilled at reviewing and checking their work and 'writing of the week' is celebrated and proudly displayed on walls for everyone to see.
- The new additional sports funding is used well and teachers are working with specialist coaches to enhance their own skills and confidence. Sport has an increasingly high profile in school and greater numbers of pupils are now joining teams and competing with other schools. The

youngest pupils have sessions on balance bicycles, building up their skills before moving up to standard bicycles.

- The achievement of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is improving. Overall, eligible pupils are now less than one and a half terms behind their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. This is a smaller than the gap of two to three terms for the 2013 Year 6 group. The funding is used effectively to provide extra support and one-to-one tuition. Workshops and regular classes, such as those in ICT skills, also help parents to help their children at home.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching is increasingly good, there are still inconsistencies which are limiting the rates of pupils' progress.
- In some lessons, the work teachers set is too easy or too hard and teachers do not check closely that pupils know what to do next, so that they can help themselves more. This means that not all learn as well as they could.
- Marking is generally good across the school and teachers write helpful comments so that pupils improve further. However, teachers do not sufficiently encourage pupils to read through marking comments, make corrections or respond to what they are told. As a result, some pupils do not improve their work quickly enough in some subjects.
- Most pupils now learn well and their progress is increasingly secure because more teaching is good. Teachers often engage pupils' interests well. For example, in a Year 6 reading lesson, the teacher used her own passion and enthusiasm to great effect when beginning to read from a book chosen by the class. Pupils readily volunteered to read out extracts and were determined to read clearly and with meaning, bringing the characters to life in the same way that the teacher had.
- Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to pupils' learning and progress and frequently provide the right balance of support at the right time. As a result, they help to ensure that the pupils they support, who find learning difficult, are making better progress.
- Homework is set regularly across all years. Pupils understand that it is a regular feature of the week that adds to their work in class, often linking to what they will be learning next.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and the great majority act responsibly in managing their own behaviour and helping others to do so. The head boy and girl take their roles very seriously and are known and respected by other pupils. Pupils volunteer for many 'jobs' and older pupils are buddies for the younger ones at playtime, while others are trained 'learning leaders' and listen to a pupil read every day. This contributes to the warm and friendly atmosphere of the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe in school and outside, and many are knowledgeable about e-safety and understand the potential dangers of misusing the internet.

- Parents, carers, and staff agree that pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils' attendance levels have risen and are now above average. Leaders are committed to maintaining a high profile for attendance and are very passionate about continuing to work with harder to reach families. Term-time holidays are not authorised and leaders are prepared to pursue those who take unauthorised absence through the use of penalty fines.
- The school has developed innovative strategies for managing pupils' behaviour at play and lunchtimes and minimising potential 'outbursts' of over-exuberant behaviour. The enclosed grassed area in the middle of the school has been developed as a place for groups to have exclusive, supervised time to let off steam and at lunchtime it is transformed into an outdoor dance studio for all who wish to participate. This highly popular activity is led by a volunteer play leader and strengthens links between the school and local community.
- Pupils have a powerful voice and regularly make suggestions about how to improve the school, through school councillors. They have set up a healthy tuck shop and plan and take assemblies on their own, raising issues which they feel are important. The school council has raised pupils' awareness of bullying and regularly discusses ways in which it could be prevented.
- Bullying is very rare and pupils comment that staff deal with it effectively when it occurs. Pupils understand that if they cannot resolve conflicts themselves, they can rely on staff to intervene quickly. There are very few racist incidents and discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and ensure the grounds are kept litter-free. Pupils know and show a high regard for each other, and this helps those who join the school late to settle easily and feel welcome. Pupils speak positively about how much they enjoy and value being a part of the school, and this is reflected in their smart appearance and good manners.

The leadership and management are good

- Under the guidance of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the school has robustly tackled underperformance by using specialist additional teachers and training teaching assistants to provide well-planned sessions in reading, writing and mathematics and ICT (information and communication technology). This is contributing to a rise in achievement across the school.
- Leaders have transformed the indoor and outdoor areas of the Reception class so that the children have many opportunities to develop their early writing and number skills. Staff more frequently assess children's progress, using new technology very effectively, and links with the main feeder Nursery school have strengthened. Leaders work closely together and share a commitment to continuous improvement. Their high expectations are reflected throughout the school. Support for leaders among other staff is strong.
- Teaching and learning are managed well and there is good support for the three newly qualified teachers. Consequently, inadequate teaching has been quickly eradicated and the quality of teaching is rising. This is beginning to bring clear improvements to achievement. Good practice is shared and enhanced through established partnerships with other schools locally.
- Leadership roles are being developed and strengthened at all levels, including subject and phase leadership, and this lies at the heart of the school's team-centred, collaborative approach. Partnerships with the National college of School Leadership and other schools have enabled staff to develop their own skills. All staff expressed their praise for the headteacher during the inspection.

- The school reviews all aspects of its work thoroughly and now acts quickly to address any gaps, so that the rate of improvement is more rapid. The school's development plan to raise achievement and its own evaluation of areas for further improvement are realistic, focused and linked to leaders' close checks on the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' progress.
- Staff training, together with the very effective and active partnership with and support from the local authority, has led to marked improvements in teaching across the school since the previous inspection. Staff are now more skilful in using assessment and progress information, and early gaps in learning are dealt with more swiftly.
- Leaders make sure that teachers' pay and performance link directly to whole-school priorities and their impact on pupils' progress. Leaders are active in checking the quality of teaching across the school, and class teachers and support staff join together more frequently to plan and prepare lessons. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching.
- Activities in lessons are supplemented by a vast number of clubs and activities, enhanced by the sports, music and dance specialists who work with the school. The promotion of the 'health through sport' initiative is gaining a higher profile in school and more pupils are now attending sports clubs and taking part in competitions. The school offers different residential trips for pupils in both key stages and enhances outdoor learning through 'Forest School' activities. Visits, such as the trip to London's Royal Albert Hall, and locally to Nottingham castle, help to broaden pupils' experiences of different cultures.
- Equal opportunities are rigorously promoted and no pupil is denied access to anything the school has to offer. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well, and ensures the all-round development of each pupil.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly committed to continuing to improve the school. They work closely with leaders and the local authority to ensure that raising the quality of teaching and learning remains at the heart of their work. They have a good understanding of information on pupils' progress, and undertake regular training to refresh their knowledge and skills.
 - Governors make good use of the most recent performance data to make comparisons with other schools, locally and nationally, and challenge school leaders where dips occur. They meet with key staff, and make visits to check directly on important areas of the school's work, such as their recent review of safeguarding.
 - Governors ensure that financial resources are efficiently managed, know how the pupil premium and sports funding is being spent and check how this has an impact on achievement and closing attainment gaps. Governors see that targets to improve the performance of staff are reviewed carefully and that teachers' pay is linked to how well pupils are doing. They are highly motivated and visible in the school, and check that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and that the breakfast club is well run.

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	122435
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	440450

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Clark
Headteacher	Meeta Dave
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2011
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