

# Radcliffe Primary School

Coronation Road, Radcliffe, Manchester, Greater Manchester M26 3RD

## Inspection dates

12–13 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- In parts of the school and in some subjects, teaching is not good enough.
- Although aspects of early years provision have improved, teaching is not consistently good.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils do not make enough progress in mathematics. Gaps in their knowledge and skills hinder their progress.
- Boys do not achieve as well as they should in writing.
- Not enough disadvantaged pupils are prepared for secondary school by the end of Year 6.
- Leaders' evaluations of the school's work are not sharp enough. This includes evaluations of how the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has improved their progress, attainment and attendance.
- Persistent absence is well above average.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school but that lessons are still sometimes disrupted by misbehaviour. Pupils are not happy with behaviour at lunchtime.
- Staff do not appear to be informing senior leaders of all incidents of prejudice-based name-calling that pupils report to them.

### The school has the following strengths

- During the last 12 months, the executive headteacher has led improvements to teaching, pupils' achievement and behaviour. These improvements are still becoming embedded.
- The executive headteacher is developing the skills of senior and other leaders. The senior leadership team is much stronger than it was, but is still relatively inexperienced.
- The executive headteacher, governors and trustees have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- The teaching of reading, including phonics, is good. Most pupils are making stronger progress and attaining at least the expected standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The curriculum is broad and engaging. It makes an especially strong contribution to pupils' good personal development.
- The nurture unit is very effective in supporting the needs of vulnerable pupils.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good throughout the school. This includes staff in Reception working more effectively with children in the outdoor provision.
- Improve progress and attainment in mathematics. Leaders should do this by:
  - improving the consistency of mathematics teaching, including in the early years
  - eliminating existing gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding
  - ensuring that pupils' misconceptions are quickly identified and rectified
  - ensuring that the most able pupils are given work that challenges them.
- Ensure that boys make good progress in writing and attain standards gained by similar pupils nationally by the end of key stage 2.
- Ensure that disadvantaged pupils are better prepared for secondary school by enabling them to make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics to attain at least the expected standards by the end of key stage 2.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by:
  - considerably reducing persistent absence and continuing to improve attendance
  - ensuring that supervision arrangements at lunchtime continue to work effectively and satisfy pupils
  - ensuring that all staff inform senior leaders of any prejudicial name-calling or behaviour that pupils report to them.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - leaders make sharper evaluations of the school's work, particularly teaching and learning
  - leaders more thoroughly evaluate the impact that pupil premium spending is having on improving the progress, attainment and attendance of disadvantaged pupils
  - governors check the school's pupil premium strategy and evaluation reports more frequently and use the information to support their questions about the impact of the pupil premium spending
  - the skills of relatively inexperienced senior and other leaders continue to be supported and developed.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- While the school's overall effectiveness is not yet good, during her 12-month tenure as executive headteacher, this leader's work has been pivotal in realising and influencing improvements to important aspects of the school's work. These include teaching, pupils' achievement and behaviour.
- The executive headteacher, who is also the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust, has coached and developed other senior and middle leaders. This has increased the shared approach to leadership. Members of this team, including the leaders of English and mathematics, are ambitious, enthusiastic and committed to the school's improvement. To varying degrees, they are improving the school's provision and pupils' outcomes. The school's capacity to improve has been strengthened as a result of the executive headteacher's development of these leaders. Even so, the new leadership team is still relatively inexperienced.
- Staff are fully in tune with leaders' vision for the school. Staff say that they are proud to work at Radcliffe and report that leaders make them feel valued, consider their well-being and support their professional development.
- Leaders undertake a wide range of checks to review the effectiveness of the school's work. These enable leaders to identify the school's main priorities for improvement. For the most part, these priorities are the right priorities to help the school improve further.
- Leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning. They visit classrooms, review pupils' work and analyse assessment information about pupils' attainment and progress. The considerable information that is gathered informs decisions about staff training needs and about which pupils need further support and challenge to improve their learning. However, leaders' evaluations do not sharply pinpoint what aspects of teaching have the greatest impact on learning and what aspects need to improve. This lack of precision slows the course of improvement.
- Although the quality of teaching remains variable, improvements have occurred. Currently, there are strengths in teaching in each phase of the school. Some staffing issues have also hindered improvements to teaching and continue to do so.
- The results of the 2018 tests at the end of key stage 2 and assessments show the impact of leaders' work to improve teaching and pupils' achievement. Improvements in reading were particularly pleasing. Writing also improved, although boys' achievement was notably below that of girls. Less improvement was evident in mathematics. While more pupils attained the expected standard in mathematics in 2018, overall progress was weak.
- It is difficult to determine how effectively the school's use of the pupil premium is improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. This is because there are shortcomings in leaders' evaluations of the difference the premium is making. Leaders allocate money to achieve specific objectives, for example to improve disadvantaged pupils' reading and to reduce persistent absence. However, they do not report adequately on whether the spending and their actions to achieve the objectives have been successful.
- The most recent pupil premium evaluation report does not include any information

about the impact of the money spent to reduce persistent absence. Evaluations of money spent to improve attendance are too broad, referring mostly to overall improvements. They do not include precise information about disadvantaged pupils' weaker attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check and key stage 2 reading tests. This means that decisions about whether to continue or change the following year's strategy are not well informed.

- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is used effectively. The funding supports the employment of a qualified PE specialist who teaches all year groups. As part of their professional development, class teachers and teaching assistants benefit from working alongside this specialist. The funding is ensuring pupils' increased participation in sport and access to extra-curricular activities.
- School leaders invest significant funds to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The recently appointed special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a good grasp of areas for development. She has already devised systems to improve teachers' accountability for pupils' achievement and teachers' understanding of the processes of accurately identifying pupils' needs. It is too early to see the full impact of these changes.
- The school's nurture unit is one example of leaders' commitment to improving the provision for, and outcomes of, pupils with SEND. This unit caters very effectively for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs.
- Pupils are very positive about the curriculum. They enjoy finding out about the lives and work of the famous explorers that underpin many topic themes. Subject leaders have ensured that important knowledge and skills are incorporated into the themes. Where subject content does not fit easily into the themes, this is taught separately. The curriculum makes a very strong contribution to pupils' personal development, including their understanding of fundamental British values. A good range of extra-curricular activities and visits, including a residential visit for older pupils, enrich the curriculum.
- Parents' and carers' views of the school are mostly positive. Many say that their children are doing well in school and are happy and safe. Others express concerns about behaviour, children's progress and changes in staff. Inspectors found that, overall, pupils like school and feel safe. Progress and behaviour are improving but are not yet good.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors and members of the trust board are ambitious for the school's success and passionate about improving pupils' academic and personal achievements. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- These leaders clearly articulate the improvements that have occurred since the school was last inspected and particularly under the leadership of the executive headteacher. They are open in acknowledging that the school is still on its journey of improvement.
- Governors visit the school regularly, walking around the school with the executive headteacher, to find out how their policies are working in practice.

- Minutes of governors' meetings show that governors ask challenging questions about pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching, behaviour and attendance.
- Governors regularly discuss the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and ask how the pupil premium is making a difference. However, governors have not probed deeply enough to find out why there are gaps in leaders' reported evaluations.
- Members of the trust board are keen to ensure that the pupil premium is used to best effect. At the time of the inspection, trustees were in the process of considering options for a review of the school's use of the pupil premium.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. Staff recruitment processes are rigorous. All staff, governors and volunteers are thoroughly vetted to ensure their suitability to work with children. Staff receive regular safeguarding training. They are knowledgeable about safeguarding matters and understand their responsibilities to report concerns about pupils' safety and well-being to the safeguarding leaders.
- School records show that safeguarding leaders act quickly on concerns. Where necessary, they seek professional advice, support and intervention to keep vulnerable pupils safe.
- Leaders recognise the safeguarding implications for pupils who are persistently absent. The appointment in September 2018 of an attendance and safeguarding leader is ensuring that this aspect is receiving increased attention. Families are supported and challenged to ensure that their children attend regularly. Leaders do not shy away from imposing fines for persistent and unacceptable absences.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies within and between key stages, year groups and subjects. The effects of weak and strong teaching are evident in pupils' books, pupils' views and observations of teaching and learning. While there are some significant strengths in teaching, the issue is one of consistency.
- Strong and weak teaching mean that pupils in the same year group can have very different learning experiences. This was evident in writing lessons, mathematics lessons and topic lessons.
- In mathematics, teachers' expectations are not always high enough. At other times, not enough account is taken of gaps in pupils' learning and pupils struggle to complete the tasks set. Some pupils say that, while mathematics is a favourite subject, the work is always too easy. Others say that they do not like mathematics because they do not understand it. Some mathematics books show errors and misconceptions that do not appear to have been identified by teachers because they continue to occur.
- Strengths in mathematics teaching are evident when teachers stretch pupils' thinking and get them involved in applying their mathematical understanding to solve problems, including in other subjects, such as science.
- There is very effective teaching of phonics. These sessions are lively and fast-paced

and hold pupils' attention. Teaching staff, including teaching assistants, have good subject knowledge and model correct sounds and blending. Guided reading sessions are also taught effectively. Teaching staff ask probing questions to check pupils' understanding of texts.

- Pupils' books showed overall weaker progress and attainment of boys in writing. However, some very good-quality writing from boys was noted, for example in topic work about the Second World War.
- The teaching of PE is of a high standard. Although the PE specialist teacher may lead the lessons, other staff also take an active role in the teaching. Pupils participate well and respond very effectively to the high expectations of behaviour.
- Teachers ensure that classrooms are bright and stimulating. Displays support pupils' developing literacy and numeracy skills, as well as prompting their interest in the inspirational individuals whom they study.
- Teaching staff are good role models for pupils. They are firm but friendly in their interactions with pupils and treat pupils with respect.
- Teachers are beginning to take greater responsibility for the work of pupils with SEND. They are being supported well by the SENCo in this.
- Teaching in the nurture unit supports the development of pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills for the period pupils attend the unit. Staff work seamlessly together as a team and consistently demonstrate appropriate behaviour and how to manage different situations and emotions.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Through the curriculum, pupils gain a secure understanding of the features of bullying and the different forms that bullying can take. Pupils are similarly well informed about different types of prejudice-based behaviours and why these are wrong. Comments from pupils about these matters showed that they had a mature and perceptive understanding of the British values and an ardent desire to live up to these.
- Pupils know that they should tell an adult if they are being bullied or know that it is happening to someone else. Pupils told inspectors that teachers and school leaders take these reports seriously and deal with issues quickly and to their satisfaction.
- From an early age, pupils are regularly taught about the dangers of using technology. As a result, they have a good understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet.
- Pupils' emotional well-being is supported very effectively. Pupils appreciate the school's counsellor, who is employed to support their social, emotional and mental health.
- The curriculum places a strong emphasis on teaching pupils important character traits, such as resilience, teamwork, communication and empathy. Pupils are expected to demonstrate these traits in their application to work, behaviour and everyday lives.
- Pupils' self-confidence and understanding of what is needed to be a good learner are

being developed effectively. Year 6 pupils, for example, showed good independence and application when working through a series of 20-minute tasks focused on flight.

- Pupils recognise the importance of regular attendance. Pupils' comments included the observation that missing school will interrupt their education and may affect future job prospects. Pupils appreciate the rewards for good attendance and strive hard to achieve these.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils in the nurture unit are supported very effectively. They take part in activities that require them to reflect on their behaviour and feelings and consider the feelings of others. Pupils are developing skills in communicating how they feel and learning to manage and improve their behaviour and social skills.
- In the rest of the school, no incidents of poor behaviour were observed by inspectors. In lessons, most pupils listen carefully to teachers. When asked, they discuss new ideas sensibly with their classmates and get on with the work they are given. A notable proportion of pupils have difficulty sustaining attention and concentration in lessons and some are not able to sustain good learning behaviours throughout the day. This is evident in pupils' books, which show that they do not always produce their best work.
- Pupils say that behaviour has improved. Nevertheless, they consider that it is not yet good. Most pupils describe behaviour as 'OK'. Very few describe it as worse than this.
- Pupils report that, at times, lessons are still disrupted by behaviour issues. They think that behaviour at lunchtime, both in the dining halls and on the playground, could be much better. Pupils say that fights sometimes break out and explain that they hear name-calling of a racist and homophobic nature more than occasionally. Pupils' biggest gripe is that lunchtime staff take little or no notice when they report behaviour concerns. Despite these examples, the pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they feel safe in school.
- Leaders' own pupil survey also showed pupils' frustration with lunchtime behaviour. Leaders have recently altered playground supervision arrangements. This is now managed by teaching support staff to ensure a more consistent approach to behaviour. A member of the senior leadership team and the school's sports leader are also deployed to the playground. A games club and colouring club are offered as an alternative to outdoor play. This was the situation that inspectors observed during the inspection. Plentiful staff were on duty and engaging with pupils. Behaviour in one of the two dining halls was better than in the other. Pupils confirmed that this is generally the case.
- The school has a clear behaviour policy, which pupils think is fair. Exclusion, both fixed-term and permanent, is used as an ongoing aspect of behaviour management. Rates of both types of exclusion are above average. This year, there has been a reduction in permanent exclusions but the number of fixed-term exclusions has increased. The school's records show that the decisions leaders take about exclusions are right and proper and not taken lightly.
- Leaders analyse behaviour in detail. Behaviour records show that they take swift and



effective action when behaviour of a racist or homophobic nature is reported. The school's logs indicate that the number of such incidents is lower than pupils say they report. As such, it appears that staff are not informing leaders of all such incidents.

- Over time, rates of attendance are below average. The overall rate of attendance this year shows improvement and is currently close to national figures. Persistent absence has increased. While some specific issues have underpinned this increase, the rate of persistent absence is still too high.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, while improving, is not yet good enough. Overall, too few pupils are well prepared for secondary school by the time they leave Year 6. In 2018, only half the Year 6 pupils attained the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics and only just over a third of disadvantaged pupils attained this standard.
- Despite some improvement in 2018, pupils' progress in mathematics by the end of key stage 2 remained significantly weak. Most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able, did not make sufficient progress. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard improved in 2018 and was much closer to the national average. However, the proportion attaining the high standard was below average.
- Leaders attribute pupils' underachievement in mathematics to a legacy of historically weak teaching and curriculum provision. While these weaknesses certainly existed, the gaps in pupils' learning have not closed securely. Currently, there is an intensive focus on ensuring that pupils of all abilities have the mathematical knowledge and skills to achieve as well as they should. However, pupils' books at both key stages still show variability in progress. Strengths in the leadership of mathematics and the improved mathematics curriculum have the potential to drive necessary improvements, including to the quality of teaching.
- Progress in writing by the end of key stage 2 improved significantly in 2018. However, this masked a variation between boys and girls. Girls made good progress and attained as well as girls nationally at the expected standard. Boys' progress and attainment were notably weaker. Analysis of boys' writing during the inspection confirmed weaker progress and attainment in a number of year groups.
- Disadvantaged pupils made generally good progress in writing. Over two thirds attained the expected standard by the end of Year 6, but none were assessed as writing at greater depth. The overall proportion of pupils attaining the greater depth standard in their writing was below average. Leaders have identified improving boys' writing and writing at greater depth as improvement priorities.
- Year 6 pupils' attainment in the 2018 grammar, punctuation and spelling test was below average and lower than in 2017. Analysis of pupils' work showed a number of repeated inaccuracies in these aspects of writing.
- Leaders have instilled a strong culture of reading within the school. This has had a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to reading and on their achievement. By the end of key stage 2 in 2018, reading progress scores for all groups of pupils were positive. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 was close to pupils nationally at the high



standard. This included disadvantaged pupils. However, only half the disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standard. Leaders identified pupils' limited vocabulary as a contributory factor and have ensured an increased focus on vocabulary this year.

- Attainment by the end of Year 2 in 2018 improved significantly. A well-above-average proportion of pupils attained greater depth in reading, while in writing and mathematics, the proportions attaining this standard were above average. Improvement was also evident in the results of the Year 1 phonics screening check. The proportion of Year 1 pupils attaining the expected standard was close to the national average, although disadvantaged pupils did not attain as well. Despite the strong phonics teaching observed during the inspection, some of the disadvantaged pupils who did not attain the Year 1 phonics standard are still struggling to use phonics effectively when reading.
- Teachers assess pupils' attainment in science and other foundation subjects each half-term against identified national curriculum objectives. Teachers' assessments indicate that most pupils are making secure progress towards the age-related expectations that leaders have identified. Leaders are currently reviewing this process.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- Children's knowledge and skills on starting the early years are generally below those typical for their age. At this point, the children's communication and language skills and their experience of the world, of books and of writing and mathematics are weaker areas of their development.
- In 2018, the proportion of Reception children attaining the good level of development needed to be ready for Year 1 improved and was in line with children this age nationally. This indicates that children made good progress during their time in the early years.
- Nevertheless, despite improvements since the previous inspection, early years provision is not yet good. This is because there are weaknesses in some aspects of teaching for Reception children.
- Weaknesses remain in the teaching of mathematics. Reception teachers do not give enough consideration to how young children learn abstract mathematical ideas. In teaching the 'thirteen-ness' of 13 and other 'teen' numbers, children struggle to understand the value of the digit '1'. This is because there is a lack of practical activities and visual clues to help the children make sense of the value of this digit. Explanations by teachers to describe teen numbers, such as '1 and 3 is 13', confuse children who are beginning to learn about the idea of addition.
- There have been effective improvements in response to the previous inspection's recommendation to make better use of the outdoor environment. The outdoor areas for both Nursery and Reception children now provide very suitable conditions for learning. Each is organised well and contains stimulating resources that are accessible to the children and meet their thirst for learning. Nursery and Reception children make choices about what they want to do, quickly become engrossed in activities and sustain interest for extended periods. However, the quality of adults' interactions with children during outdoor sessions differs between Nursery and Reception.

- Nursery staff constantly engage with the children. They verbalise what children are doing, model spoken language and vocabulary well and extend children's talk. The same level and quality of engagement were not evident for Reception children.
- The children's learning journals indicate good progress in learning phonics and early writing skills. The children have access to a wide range of good-quality books and show keen interest in these. The many opportunities provided for children to develop their physical coordination and dexterity also support their development in writing.
- Early years staff use assessment information effectively to identify children who need additional support or challenge. This informs the planning of focus activities for groups and individual children. There is effective communication with parents about the children's achievements and well-being.
- Adults have warm relationships with the children and take good care of them. The children have developed a secure understanding of the rules for working and playing safely together. It is clear that the children enjoy school, trust the adults who teach them and feel safe.
- The early years leader has implemented a number of very positive changes to improve the effectiveness of the early years provision. This includes significant improvements to the outdoor environment and more direct teaching of phonics, literacy and numeracy. The leader monitors the early years provision but evaluations are not incisive enough in identifying of the impact of teaching and adults' interactions on the children's learning.

## School details

Unique reference number	139999
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10057945

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	339
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mark Granby
Executive headteacher	Nicola Nelson
Telephone number	0161 723 4538
Website	<a href="http://www.radcliffeprimary.bc-et.co.uk">www.radcliffeprimary.bc-et.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:radcliffeprimary@bury.gov.uk">radcliffeprimary@bury.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–11 November 2016

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Bury College Education Trust, which is a multi-academy trust. It is governed by a local board of governors and managed by a board of trustees. The school's executive headteacher is the CEO of the trust.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is high.
- The proportions of pupils with SEND or an education, health and care plan are above average.
- The school's early years provides for Nursery and Reception children. Nursery children attend part-time.
- The school has a nurture unit for pupils with behavioural, social and emotional needs.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. They looked at pupils' work in books and listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness and their plans for improvement.
- Inspectors examined safeguarding information and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors held three formal discussions with pupils and spoke to other pupils informally in lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors held discussions with the school's senior and subject leaders. The lead inspector had a discussion with three governors, including the chair of governors, and two trustees, including the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors took account of 35 responses to Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View, including 19 written responses. They considered a recent parental survey undertaken by the school.
- Inspectors considered 25 responses to the online staff survey. There were no responses to the online pupil survey.

## Inspection team

Margot D'Arcy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Maureen Hints	Ofsted Inspector
Saeeda Ishaq	Ofsted Inspector

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