



Radlett Preparatory School

Independent School

Inspection report

**Better
education
and care**

DfES Registration Number 919/6034
Unique Reference Number 117615
Inspection number 296860
Inspection dates 22-23 February 2007
Reporting inspector Mrs Michèle Messaoudi

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

Age group 4-10	Published 16 March 2007	Reference no. 296860
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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Radlett Preparatory School is an independent co-educational primary school which admits children aged four to eleven years. There are 470 pupils on roll, taught in three classes per year group. The school was established over 70 years ago and moved to its present location in Radlett, in Hertfordshire, in 1980. It is housed in an extended Georgian listed building set in extensive grounds. The school was last inspected in 2001. It aims to '*provide an excellent, balanced education. Children are encouraged to realise their potential abilities, to learn to respect each other, to be well-mannered, morally upright and to be active members of a happy, supportive school.*'

Evaluation of the school

Radlett Preparatory School is a good school that is successful in fulfilling its aims. Pupils receive a good quality of education and care and are highly valued as individuals. As a result, they make at least good progress throughout the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school is led by an experienced team of managers committed to preserving the family ethos of the school and furthering its academic excellence. The rigour of its self-evaluation reflects its capacity for continued improvement.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and has some outstanding features. Across the age range, it is deliberately academic and taught at a brisk pace. It provides a good breadth and balance of subjects giving each pupil the opportunity to experience a well-rounded education. It is generally well planned and continually reviewed. From the Reception classes, there is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills to provide a secure foundation for other subjects. However, on occasion, unrealistic demands are placed on these pupils to focus on academic learning at the end of the day when they need to be engaged in physical and creative activities. The curriculum provides ample opportunities to develop pupils' already good speaking and listening skills further. Reading and writing skills are taught very well and pupils achieve highly in writing, and very highly in reading by the end of Year 2. The school is currently involved in making stronger cross-curricular links and enhancing the development of investigative,

team work and problem-solving skills. It is also seeking to devise a strategy to develop literacy further in all subjects. In addition to National Curriculum subjects and religious education (RE), pupils learn French from Year 3 and have the option of a wide range of music tuition. The use of specialist teachers results in pupils achieving highly in music, French, information and communication technology (ICT), citizenship and physical education (PE). The school is looking into facilitating access to computers and increasing the use of ICT across the curriculum. Another strength of the curriculum is the quality of support given to pupils with even mild learning difficulties, and to those for whom English is an additional language. Consequently, these pupils achieve as well as their peers. The curriculum is adequately resourced. A good range of educational visits contributes to the enrichment of pupils' learning. Pupils are enthusiastic about the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer and appreciate the opportunity to develop their sports, artistic and communication skills further.

The quality of teaching is good, with much that is outstanding. Teachers have very high expectations of work and of behaviour and teach their lessons at a brisk pace. They establish excellent relationships at all levels and many have created a purposeful yet relaxed working atmosphere. Consequently, they promote an excellent attitude to learning in pupils, who enjoy learning, as demonstrated by the high quality of their responses. They take pride in their work and present it neatly. Teachers ask probing questions that promote pupils' thinking skills. In the best lessons, staff have excellent subject knowledge and match tasks closely to each pupil's needs. Pupils have good opportunities for learning independently and developing practical skills, with time to discuss the task with their classmates. In some less effective lessons, staff teach the same material to the whole class, regardless of its inappropriateness for some pupils. These lessons lack pace and vigour, as pupils who find the task too difficult need more support and are not able to work independently. Resources are used effectively to support learning, especially in PE, and where there is an interactive whiteboard.

The assessment of pupils' learning is good. Staff continually check pupils' understanding in lessons and review their progress weekly. Marking is completed regularly and conscientiously, with some staff giving clear guidance on how pupils could improve their work. A wide range of tests is used effectively to inform planning and teaching. There are rigorous systems in place to monitor each pupil's progress.

As a result of the good curriculum and teaching, pupils make good progress. By the time they reach Year 6, the vast majority of them are successful in gaining places at the schools of their choice, with many obtaining scholarships.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The school makes outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as reflected by pupils' outstanding behaviour, exemplary attitude to learning and excellent personal development. This success owes much to the high quality pastoral system in place. Staff are very caring and successfully maintain the 'big family' feel of the school despite its size. Pupils are well known by staff and peers and valued as individuals. They also feel well supported in their academic learning. Consequently, they enjoy their school life, their attendance is good and they enthusiastically avow that 'this school is amazing.' Pupils demonstrate exemplary self-discipline throughout the day. They listen respectfully to others and show consideration when moving even in constricted spaces. They readily offer to help and emulate the kindness modelled by the staff.

The school provides many curricular and pastoral opportunities to develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Their interpersonal and communication skills are promoted well through citizenship debates and drama. Each pupil's achievements, however small, are celebrated. Many parents commented positively about this in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires. Pupils compete eagerly for house points and gold stars and the twice-weekly meeting with the principal is the highlight of the week.

Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and have many opportunities to make worthwhile contributions. The older pupils enjoy their 'buddy' sessions with younger pupils. All pupils have the opportunity to participate in three school productions. They are aware of others less fortunate than themselves and raise a considerable amount of money for charity each year. Through the school council, pupils have initiated positive changes for their school community, such as the provision of cooler water. They feel part of the local community and have recently sung to local old people. They learn how to be responsible citizens and about local, national and international institutions. However, they have not yet been involved in longer-term projects to contribute further to the local community. The older pupils prepare well for their future economic well-being by learning how to present a curriculum vitae and having mock interviews. World religions are taught as part of the RE curriculum, which prepares pupils well for life in a multi-cultural society. This, together with art, history, drama and numerous educational visits, also extends pupils' cultural awareness. Furthermore, assemblies and RE lessons give pupils a good spiritual foundation and opportunities for reflection.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school has made good provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. There are effective procedures in place to minimise the risks incurred by all in the course of the school day. Consequently, pupils feel safe, well cared for and describe the school as 'supportive'. Instances of bullying are rare and are dealt with effectively. However, the school has not yet reviewed its policies and procedures to safeguard pupils in compliance with the recent guidance. The nominated person and the staff have yet to receive the appropriate training. Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and to take regular exercise, but feel that the school could improve its healthy eating policy by providing dedicated dining space and hot meals in winter. The school fulfils its duties in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has a suitable recruitment procedure in place to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children. However, the checks obtained from the Criminal Records Bureau are not carried out at an enhanced level. The school is already addressing the issue.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is situated in grounds of great natural interest that are used to enhance the curriculum. The teaching accommodation is fit for purpose. However, some of the classrooms have reached maximum capacity and there is no suitable provision for indoor games in inclement weather. Provision for outdoor play is good.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a good range of information to parents and others through its prospectus, parents' information booklets and its website. In addition, newsletters outline the curricular and extra-curricular activities for each term. Although teachers are available to meet parents on request, not all parents feel that all teachers are approachable. Parents receive two detailed annual reports on their children's progress and meet teachers formally once a year. However, many parents feel that they are insufficiently informed of their children's progress. The school is aware of this concern and is planning an additional consultation evening.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has suitable procedures to deal with complaints. Although copies are made available to parents, some are unaware of these procedures.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- ensure that all aspects of the Department for Education and Skills guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education (2007)* are reflected in its policy and procedures (paragraph 3(2)(b)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, ensure that they have been checked with the Criminal Records Bureau at an enhanced level (paragraph 4(b)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- continue to ensure that teachers plan tasks that meet the needs of each pupil more closely
- implement a strategy to enhance literacy across the curriculum
- continue to increase provision for ICT

School details

Name of school	Radlett Preparatory School		
DfES number	919/6034		
Unique reference number	117615		
Type of school	Day preparatory school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1935		
Age range of pupils	4-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 295	Girls: 175	Total: 470
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,940		
Address of school	Kendal Hall Watling Street Radlett Hertfordshire WD7 7LY		
Telephone number	01923 856812		
Fax number	01923 855880		
Email address	admin@radlett-prep.herts.sch.uk		
Principal	Mr Wayne Warren		
Proprietor	Mr Wayne Warren		
Reporting inspector	Mrs Michèle Messaoudi		
Dates of inspection	22–23 February 2007		