

Radcliffe-on-Trent Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122670
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	327778
Inspection dates	11–12 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Keith Edwards

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	252
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret-Anne Dickie
Headteacher	Mr Steve Arnold
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2005
School address	Cropwell Road Radcliffe-on-trent Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG12 2FS
Telephone number	01159110193
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school serves the village of Radcliffe-on-Trent. Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds and all have English as their first language. Attainment on entry is slightly above national expectations. Pupil mobility is below average. The proportion of children entitled to a free school meal and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below average.

The school is currently undergoing major rebuilding work.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that provides excellent value for money. It has improved significantly since the last inspection and has an excellent capacity to maintain this momentum. The key issues from the last inspection have been fully resolved, the quality of teaching is outstanding and standards remain consistently high. Pupils are very proud of their school and are keen participants in the richness of opportunities that the school provides. The curriculum is excellent and tailored carefully to motivate pupils and nurture the excitement of learning. Furthermore, the quality of care and academic guidance is excellent but gets better and better. One delighted parent, whose views are echoed by many others, commented, 'All of my children love being part of the junior school, which I feel is a direct reflection of the caring and stimulating environment which the staff work so hard to provide.'

Standards are consistently high in English, mathematics and science when compared to national averages. The school sets ambitious academic targets for its pupils and is largely successful in meeting them year-on-year. The school has rightly made a priority of developing pupils' handwriting skills so that their high quality work is presented in the best possible way and more closely matches the high standards achieved in reading. Standards in mathematics are well above average because pupils are very well taught and there is a strong emphasis on problem-solving that enables pupils to grow in confidence in applying their skills. In science, an increasing proportion of pupils achieve the higher levels because pupils benefit from the exciting investigative approach to learning.

Pupils who find learning difficult make excellent progress because they are very well supported, particularly by their teachers and a team of dedicated teaching assistants. The more able pupils are challenged to reach their potential and they are provided with excellent guidance on what they need to do to improve. Consequently, pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and their achievement is outstanding.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are exemplary. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and attendance rates are consistently very high. Their personal development is promoted most effectively because teachers make clear their expectations of good learning behaviour and encourage independent, group and team activities. Staff respect and value pupils who, in turn, develop self-confidence, self-esteem and self-discipline; their behaviour is outstanding. Pupils' knowledge of how to keep themselves safe is excellent and they respond whole-heartedly to the many initiatives encouraging them to adopt healthy lifestyles. They work hard and play well together, forming excellent relationships with one another and with adults in school. Pupils willingly take on extra responsibilities such as training to become 'Mini Leaders' for school playtime activities and school council work. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding, although not enough is done to help prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society.

The school benefits from excellent leadership and management. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. He has nurtured the ethos of high achievement and has motivated and empowered his colleagues to settle for nothing but the best. Teamwork is at the heart of all of the school's success and every effort is made to ensure that all of the pupils achieve as well as they can. The school has made the most of its involvement both with national and local initiatives to raise achievement and to strengthen social and community cohesion. The skills of the governors have been carefully harnessed; they are accomplished in contributing to the

strategic development of the school and holding it to account. The school's view of itself, although rather modest in part, is accurate and has sustained its success.

What the school should do to improve further

- Place greater emphasis on the celebration of cultural diversity in contemporary British society.
- Develop a consistent handwriting policy to help pupils' high quality work to be presented in the best possible way.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Overall standards at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are significantly above the national average year-on-year. Boys and girls achieve equally and outstandingly well. The focus on encouraging speaking and listening, particularly through drama, has been a key element of the school's strategy. Current work shows that an increasing proportion of pupils express themselves accurately and confidently across a range of subjects. Pupils have an excellent understanding of grammar and are confident in their use of a rich lexicon of vocabulary. However, some pupils do not reach their potential because they lack a fluent handwriting style and this impairs standards of presentation. Pupils benefit in mathematics and science from the regular opportunities to discuss their ideas in small groups and to solve problems. Pupils achieve well in music and sport, reaching high standards in a range of disciplines and this strongly supports their personal development.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' excellent behaviour, their enthusiasm for learning and willingness to help their teachers are just a few examples of pupils' contribution to the success of the school. Attendance is exceptionally good because pupils thoroughly enjoy school life. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is excellent. They grow in independence and confidence, and have many opportunities to exercise responsibility from the time they first enter the school. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of how important it is to be good citizens and contribute extremely well to the school community and beyond through the many jobs they do such as peer mentors, pupil councilors and play facilitators. Opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the wider multicultural society are not quite as strong but their developing links with a school in Kenya and fundraising for a variety of charities helps them recognise they are part of a global community. They have an excellent understanding of how to follow healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe. These superb aspects of pupils' personal development, together with their excellent learning progress, provide first-rate preparation for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The cumulative effect of the school's high quality of teaching explains why pupils make outstanding progress overall. Amongst many collective strengths, excellent relationships and the most effective use of pupils working as a group to learn, stand out. Classrooms are hives of activity and learning where pupils give of their very best because of the encouraging and

motivating way they are taught. Teachers are skilled at appealing to the different ways pupils learn, for example, by providing visual prompts to support their explanations. Pupils are given excellent opportunities for independent research and discovery, and so they become good at learning on their own. Skilled and carefully deployed teaching assistants play a crucial role in helping to ensure pupils' individual needs are given due consideration. Furthermore, staff work very effectively in year group teams. On such occasions, they teach pupils as a year group together, capitalising on their different strengths as teachers. This was seen in a stunning lesson where one teacher stepped into character as Blodddon, in order to help pupils understand better about different characters. Creative writing is most skilfully taught and lessons really inspire pupils. Teachers have an excellent command of their subject material and teach with passion, as seen in a dance lesson where pupils were moving in order to keep feathers in the air, accompanied by stirring classical music. Just occasionally, too long is spent on introductions on the carpet, and then pupils' learning starts to flag.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Pupils thrive because of the rich, vibrant and varied curriculum on offer. There is a very strong focus on pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The use of drama, role play and visits out to inspire pupils to be creative writers is a notable strength. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills currently have a lesser focus because of the restrictions imposed by the building works. Subjects are linked together very well, for example, teaching scientific words in a literacy lesson. The curriculum is continually being reviewed to ensure what is being offered is up-to-date, relevant and captures pupils' interests. A wide variety of sports are offered and the uptake is high, with the school often gaining successes in local competitions. There is a strong creative element in the school, for example, producing some very good artwork such as the pencil sketches of Elvis and oil pastels of Boudicca. Many pupils learn a musical instrument and there are stunning choirs and a strong tradition of sell-out school productions. These, and a plethora of other learning opportunities, support pupils' outstanding personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The headteacher sets the tone for the excellence of care and consideration provided for each child. There is a very strong sense of this school being part of one big family and all staff share a deep concern that all pupils will thrive and achieve. Very good links have been forged with outside support agencies and the school plays a pro-active role in looking after any pupils who may be vulnerable. Excellent support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All procedures for keeping pupils safe are securely in place. Academic guidance is exemplary. As well as meticulous tracking of each pupil's progress, pupils have an astute awareness of their targets and levels they are working at. For example, writing guides and individual diaries, where they make their own notes, are fundamental in helping to raise the standard of writing for the oldest pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding at every level. There has been outstanding progress since the last inspection. Although the school's self-evaluation

documentation needs updating, the school's view of itself is accurate and has resulted in a clear strategy for continuing improvement. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, senior staff and subject leaders, has been resolutely steadfast in his drive for excellence and the school has developed an extraordinary eye for detail to ensure that all aspects of the school's work are as good as possible. All of the staff are involved in, and committed to, this process. Consequently, the pupils have benefited enormously and standards are high. The development of the quality of teaching, of the curriculum and of assessment procedures to ensure that the work set enables all groups of pupils to achieve their best, have been significant components of this strategy. Provision for community cohesion is good. Through a very wide range of activities pupils are engaged with the local community making full use of the school's facilities. The school recognises that more could be done to promote the global aspects of social cohesion. The governing body is fully involved in strategic development and has become confident in its ability to hold the school to account, particularly in terms of monitoring standards and overall effectiveness.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

15 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Radcliffe-on-Trent Junior School, Nottingham, NG12 2FS

We really enjoyed our visit to your school this month because everybody was so helpful and friendly. We particularly enjoyed our discussions with you and hearing your views. It was also delightful to be able to work with you in your classrooms, take part in your assemblies, meet the school council and watch your rehearsals for the Christmas concert. We can understand why you are so proud of your school as there are many things that make it special. Here are some of them.

- Your work is excellent and you achieve high standards.
- You have an excellent attitude towards your work and you behave very well indeed.
- The school is very mindful of the need to keep you safe and happy.
- Your teachers are inspirational and they make sure that learning is fun and exciting.
- The school provides a wide range of activities to keep you interested.
- Mr Arnold and his team are determined to make sure the school gets better and better.

You are very fortunate to be able to attend such a good junior school. Very few schools are as good as yours. It is really important that you continue to work hard and make the most of the opportunities the school provides. We have found one or two matters that should help the school to become even better when they have been attended to. First, it should do more work to help you appreciate the richness of the different cultures in our society and the wider world. Furthermore, you could try a little harder with your handwriting and presentation to show your work off to best effect.

I would like to wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Edwards

Lead inspector