

Radley Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123157
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	340294
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Marion Thompson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Jewell
Headteacher	Frances Lockwood
Date of previous school inspection	0 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including the school development plan, assessment information, safeguarding documentation, curricular planning, samples of pupils' writing and audits undertaken by the school. The team analysed the results of the 78 Ofsted questionnaires completed by parents and looked at staff and pupil questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the learning and progress of boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in Key Stage 2
- the impact of teaching and the curriculum on improving pupils' progress in writing throughout the school and in mathematics in Key Stage 2
- the contribution of the school to the promotion of community cohesion, especially the understanding of the range of faiths and cultures in contemporary Britain.

Information about the school

This is a very small school, which has a mixed Foundation Stage Unit for children aged 3'5. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. In January 2009, the governing body took responsibility for the independently run pre-school on the school site. Substantial rebuilding work has taken place. This was completed in October 2008. The Early Years Foundation Stage is now housed in a purpose-built classroom. The school has gained the Activemark and the Healthy Schools award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides a good education, and is improving rapidly. Parents are strongly supportive of the school, and particularly value the leadership of the headteacher. She has secured what one parent described as 'a dramatic improvement over the last two years', during a fairly turbulent period. She is supported well by governors and staff. Attainment has risen and is now well above average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good academic progress and their personal development and behaviour are good. All aspects of provision have improved, because of effective planning, based on an accurate evaluation of the work of the school. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

The major contributory factors to this improvement are:

- well paced teaching which provides a good but realistic level of challenge to pupils of different ages and abilities in mixed age classes
- a skills based curriculum which provides exciting, first-hand experiences that motivate pupils to learn
- more stimulating writing tasks, which have been particularly successful in encouraging boys to write at greater length, especially in Key Stage 2
- sensitive care and good academic guidance which promote pupils' enthusiastic attitudes to learning and help them to develop into thoughtful and independent young people.

Progress in mathematics is slower in Years 3 and 4 than elsewhere, because of weaknesses in the area of calculation, but this is improving rapidly. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory, children make steady progress and leadership and management are sound. However, children's progress in mathematical and language development is occasionally limited because assessment information is not used to match activities closely to children's interests and needs. In this largely monocultural school, pupils' awareness and experience of the diversity of faiths and cultures in the United Kingdom are rather limited.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By September 2010:
 - Improve progress and learning in mathematical and communication skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage by using assessment information more consistently to match activities to children's needs and interests.
 - Provide more opportunities for pupils to understand the diverse range of faiths

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and cultures in the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils of all abilities in Years 1 to 6 make good progress from their starting points and by Year 6, attainment is well above average. This good achievement is supported well by pupils' interest in their work, good behaviour, growing independence and sustained application. Reading and investigative skills in science and mathematics are particular strengths. For example, Year 6 pupils confidently tackled challenging problems, involving converting metric weights into imperial, testing out their ideas with impressive clarity of thinking and supporting each other when necessary. Gifted pupils were successfully dealing with a taxing investigation into the link between the area and perimeter of different shapes. Progress in mathematics in Years 3 and 4 which has been slower, especially in calculation, is improving. The content and style of pupils' written work have improved rapidly because of the strategies the school has put in place, but the quality of handwriting and presentation remain variable. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because work is well matched to their needs. Pupils mature into sensible young people who are well prepared for the next stage of their lives by their above average skills in literacy and numeracy, well developed social skills, and good awareness of how to live a healthy lifestyle. They work and play safely and say there is little bullying. They enjoy all aspects of school life, from 'Wake Up, Shake Up' in the morning to the well attended school clubs. They make a good contribution to the school and local community, for example the promotion of care for the environment by the Eco Team and volunteers who take part in community events, such as singing in concerts in Dorchester Abbey. Pupils know right from wrong and are sensitive to spiritual issues. However, their knowledge and understanding of the range of faiths and cultures in contemporary UK society are somewhat limited. Attendance is broadly average and most pupils attend regularly. However, some days are lost through a small minority of parents taking their children out of school for their annual holidays.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Brisk, well-paced teaching presents pupils of all abilities with a good level of challenge. Respectful and friendly relationships with adults motivate pupils to learn. However, occasionally, questioning does not help pupils to develop their ideas sufficiently. Homework is well planned, regular and interesting. Marking and feedback in class, especially in English, provide good guidance which helps pupils to improve their work. The teaching of mathematics in lower Key Stage 2 is improving and is beginning to focus on weaker areas. Pupils enjoy the excitement provided by the recently introduced integrated curriculum, such as the Second World War topic studied by Years 3 and 4. Special events, such as the Eco Week, motivate pupils, especially boys, to write more extensively. Information and communication technology is being incorporated more systematically into the curriculum, but is not yet being exploited to its full potential. The school works effectively with families, external partners and agencies to create a caring environment which promotes pupils' health and well-being. Parents and pupils appreciate the significant improvements to behaviour brought about by the recently introduced behaviour policy. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities meets their needs well. Transition arrangements are well planned and pupils feel confident about moving on. The school has recognised that the policy on attendance needs to be revised and this process is in hand.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

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The vision and leadership of the headteacher, in the successful drive to improve achievement, have won the overwhelming support of the entire school community. Target setting has been used effectively to raise expectations. Careful planning, based on an accurate evaluation of the work of the school, has secured improvements in teaching, the curriculum and academic guidance. Tracking of pupils' progress by senior staff and monitoring of teaching are effective in promoting equal opportunities for all pupils. Subject leaders, many of whom are new to their roles, are rapidly developing skills in checking up on the quality of planning and marking. Further professional development is planned to extend this role to observing lessons. Governors are very supportive and also challenge the school constructively over key aspects of its performance. However, their monitoring activities are not precisely focused. Arrangements for safeguarding are secure and pupils develop a good understanding of how to stay safe. Parents appreciate the way in which the school responds to their concerns. For example, the recent review of the homework policy resulted in homework being set more regularly and in improved guidelines for parents. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. Whilst common values are promoted well within the school and local community, pupils' awareness, understanding and experience of the range of faiths and cultures within the UK are not as well developed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children typically start the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skills that are above those expected for their age. However, in the current group calculation skills are

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below expected levels. Children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals because they are soundly supported by adults. The curriculum provides a sensible balance of child-initiated and teacher-led activities. However, adult-led activity does not always match children's specific needs closely enough or build on child-led play, because opportunities for ongoing assessment are occasionally missed, particularly in language and mathematical development. The indoor learning environment is well resourced. Children are learning to take responsibility for choosing and putting away their toys, but tidying up is not yet an established routine. The role play areas, a kitchen and a 'play' house, attract more girls than boys. Some older children, particularly girls, enjoyed 'having a tea party' and maintained a lengthy discussion. Staff are aware that the level of physical challenge presented by the outdoor area is currently a little limited and plans are in place to address this.

Parents appreciate the good quality of care which ensures that children settle quickly and are safe and happy. Children form close and trusting relationships with adults, develop confidence and feel secure. They enjoy their learning, behave well and learn to listen to others. Leadership has been successful in developing this positive ethos. However, monitoring the quality and effectiveness of assessment and planning has not been given a high enough priority.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire was very high. The inspection team agrees with the very positive views of the school's work held by the vast majority of parents. They feel that their children enjoy school and are kept safe. They are happy with their children's experience of school. Inspection evidence did not support the view expressed by a small number of parents who feel that the school does not deal with unacceptable behaviour well and does not take account of their suggestions.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Radley Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 78 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 94 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	71	22	28	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	68	87	10	13	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	49	63	28	36	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	49	38	49	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	64	28	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	58	31	40	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	65	25	32	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	56	72	18	23	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	58	31	40	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	50	33	42	3	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	62	27	35	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	62	79	16	21	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	74	19	24	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



6 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Radley Church of England Primary School, Abingdon OX14 3QF

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. Your views and those of your parents and carers helped us very much in coming to our judgements and we were delighted that we had such a high number of responses. In discussion, many of you were really enthusiastic about what the school had to offer, so you will be pleased to know we agree that it provides you with a good education where you achieve well. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle in happily and enjoy learning because of the good care the team of staff provide.

Across the school we were impressed with:

- the good progress you make and your enjoyment of learning, especially in reading
- your good behaviour and the way you help each other in class
- the care the school takes to ensure you are safe and happy
- the lively teaching and stimulating curriculum which provide you with a good level of challenge and interesting experiences
- the strong leadership provided by the headteacher who, supported well by the staff, is working hard to make sure things continue to improve.

In order to improve things even further we have asked the staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage to plan activities that improve children's communication and mathematical skills more quickly. We have also asked the school to make sure that you have a better knowledge and understanding about other faiths and cultures in the UK today.

We hope you continue to enjoy your education as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Marion Thompson

Lead inspector

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