



# Radlett Lodge School

Independent Special School

Inspection report

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**Better  
education  
and care**

DfES Registration Number      919/6215  
Unique Reference Number      117646  
Inspection number              296859  
Inspection dates                30-31 January 2007  
Reporting inspector              Mrs Pauline Allison HMI

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).

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|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Age group<br>4-13 | Inspection dates<br>23 February 2007 | Reference no.<br>296859 |
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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 Lodge is an approved, independent special school established in 1974 and run by the National Autistic Society (NAS). It is situated in purpose-built accommodation near Radlett in Hertfordshire. It provides an on-site residence for pupils at The Lodge. Pupils can attend the school between the ages of four and 16. There are currently 49 pupils aged between four and 13, including 11 weekly boarders. The school is developing its provision for pupils of secondary school age. All the pupils, of whom a majority are boys, have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder and each has a statement of special educational need. The school provides for pupils who have severe learning difficulties, for those who have complex needs including Asperger Syndrome and for pupils who have high functioning autism. The school aims to focus on the individual needs of the pupils and, by providing a carefully structured curriculum within a positive ethos, to encourage all pupils to be as independent as possible. It was last inspected in 2001.

## Evaluation of the school

Radlett Lodge provides a good quality of education with some outstanding features. The care the school takes of its pupils is outstanding. The high expectations and excellent leadership of the headteacher and the senior management team result in a dedicated and skilled staff team who effectively meet the individual needs of the pupils. The school successfully meets its aims and is right to be proud of its achievements. It meets all the regulations.

## Quality of education

The quality of education is good and some aspects are outstanding. The school provides a good curriculum which meets the requirements of the pupils' statements of special educational need. The curriculum is supported by clear plans and schemes of work. There is a strong emphasis on addressing the social and communication needs of the pupils. The curriculum includes good opportunities for pupils to practise skills, and this enables them to generalise

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from the structured input they receive in lessons. Good use of local amenities, for example visits to shops and cafés, extends this provision and contributes to the success of the community based education programme. The 24 hour curriculum is effectively supported by staff in the residence. The work of the speech and language therapist is clearly linked to developing the pupils' social and communication skills. This is implemented through small group work and its impact is seen in wider applications in the classroom and other settings. The curriculum for Key Stage 3 pupils is still being developed. The school is also considering what will be necessary to meet the needs of pupils when they enter Key Stage 4.

The quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding. The school's teaching strategies are based on the 'SPELL' (Structure Positive Empathy Low Arousal Links) framework of the NAS, and the consistency of planning is a significant strength. Staff plan in great detail for all aspects of teaching. They include a range of methods of communication, and these ensure that pupils are motivated, enjoy their lessons and achieve well. All teaching is at least good and much is outstanding. The highly structured teaching environment, close attention to pupils' individual needs, and good use of plenary sessions to assess learning, all contribute to this judgement. There is outstanding deployment and involvement of learning support staff. All staff focus consistently on promoting good communication and behaviour. Promoting the pupils' independence and self-help skills is integral to the planning of lessons. There are frequent opportunities for pupils of all abilities to make choices and work collaboratively, where possible. There are also opportunities at the end of lessons for pupils to evaluate their own work. Resources are plentiful, well organised, and appropriate to the needs of the pupils.

Assessment of pupils' achievements is thorough and detailed in all aspects of the curriculum. It takes place during lessons and at regular points throughout the school year. The high standard of teaching ensures that the pupils frequently experience success in meeting the many targets set for their progress, particularly in those set for their personal and social development. Through its recording systems the school is able to show the good progress pupils make throughout the curriculum. The school has plans to refine and develop its systems further, in order to better demonstrate academic progress. Parents are involved at home in supporting work on their child's specific targets. Staff provide helpful guidance on how they can assist their child to meet these targets. Parents are very pleased with the ways in which the school helps their children to enjoy and achieve and are appreciative of the 'tailor-made' strategies adopted by the school.

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## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

This is outstanding because of the impact of the provision on pupils' personal development. Spiritual awareness is promoted through giving opportunities for pupils to reflect on and begin to understand their own emotions and feelings and, where possible, those of others. They have good opportunities to experience the natural world, both on class visits and in the playground. There are particular strengths in social and moral development. In the context of a school where pupils have significant difficulties in their social interaction and communication, pupils treat staff and each other with respect. Some work together collaboratively, for example, in mathematics when they supported each other in meeting a timed target. They are encouraged to celebrate their own achievements and those of their peers. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility, for example, by taking registers and tidying up the classroom. There is an elected school council and pupils are proud of their roles in this and value the opportunity to contribute to school life. Many pupils are pleased to greet visitors, talk to them and show them their work. Others, with little verbal communication, show they can cope well with changes in their routine and with having unfamiliar adults in their classes. The school provides very good opportunities for inclusion within the local community through purposeful visits.

Rules and expectations are clear and followed by everyone. Playground rules are permanently displayed in the playground and school grounds. Staff successfully promote the school policy to achieve positive behaviour. Their skill in managing challenging situations and rewarding good behaviour, linked to clear expectations and consistent responses, enables pupils' behaviour to be outstanding.

Cultural development is promoted through religious education and assemblies where pupils learn about the culture of other countries, including major world faith groups. Pupils have opportunities to join in school productions and to contribute to the local Eisteddfod.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school takes outstanding care of its pupils. Parents are confident that their children are safe. Staff provide consistently high levels of care and supervision. Child protection procedures are implemented well, and the thorough induction programme for staff ensures they receive appropriate training. Many staff are trained to provide First Aid, and the school has clear procedures for managing pupils' medical needs. There is an outstanding emphasis on the safety of pupils and in helping them to understand what behaviour is appropriate and what

might place them at risk. Pupils know they can ask for help if they have any worries and are confident that staff will address their concerns. Any incidents and accidents are carefully recorded, as are details of sanctions for those pupils for whom it has been agreed these are appropriate. The school carries out thorough risk assessments for all aspects of school life and plans carefully for visits away from the school. Pupils are helped to understand the importance of eating healthy food and have very good opportunities to take exercise. The school has regard to the Disability Discrimination Act (2002) and has drawn up a three-year accessibility plan.

## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school carries out thorough checks to ensure the suitability of all staff to work with children.

## School's premises and accommodation

The accommodation for both the school, and resident pupils, is purpose built and well maintained. It enables pupils to learn effectively. Within the school there is dedicated provision for food technology, information and communication technology, art and physical education, as well as specialist areas, such as the sensory and soft play rooms. Some speech and language therapy sessions take place in The Lodge, and the school has recently developed a library provision there. Facilities for outside play are excellent and include a wide range of equipment, with separate areas for active and quiet play. There are also good opportunities within the grounds for pupils to experience nature. The school currently has seven classes at the school, five of which are for pupils of primary age. The school is aware that plans to develop the secondary provision will place a strain on this accommodation.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a wide range of accurate and up to date information for parents and carers. This is available within the prospectus and on a helpful website. There are good opportunities for parents to receive news of their children through home-school diaries, newsletters with photographs, and by participation in their children's annual reviews. The school further engages parents in initiatives, for example, in helping promote an increased understanding of bullying, and in offering suggestions for helping their children in the school holidays.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a complaints policy which fully meets the regulations. Where any complaint is received, it is dealt with in accordance with the regulations.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

## What the school could do to improve further

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

- extend the planning to meet the accommodation and curriculum needs for the developing secondary department.

## School details

|   |  |          |           |
|---|--|----------|-----------|
| Name of school  | Radlett Lodge School   |          |           |
| DfES number   | 919/6215   |          |           |
| Unique reference number                                       | 117646   |          |           |
| Type of school  | Special school   |          |           |
| Status  | Independent  |          |           |
| Date school opened  | 30 November 1974   |          |           |
| Age range of pupils   | 4-16   |          |           |
| Gender of pupils  | Mixed  |          |           |
| Number on roll (full-time pupils)                             | Boys: 40   | Girls: 9 | Total: 49 |
| Number of boarders  | Boys: 9  | Girls: 2 | Total: 11 |
| Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need | Boys: 40   | Girls: 9 | Total: 49 |
| Number of pupils who are looked after                         | Boys: 6  | Girls: 1 | Total: 7  |
| Annual fees (day pupils)                                      | £33,118  |          |           |
| Annual fees (boarders)  | £57,348  |          |           |
| Address of school   | Radlett Lodge School<br>Harper Lane<br>Radlett<br>Hertfordshire<br>WD7 9HW |          |           |
| Telephone number  | 01923 854922   |          |           |
| Fax number  | 01923859922  |          |           |
| Email address   | radlett.lodge@nas.org.uk   |          |           |
| Headteacher   | Mrs Lynda Tucker   |          |           |
| Proprietor  | The National Autistic Society  |          |           |
| Reporting inspector   | Mrs Pauline Allison HMI  |          |           |
| Dates of inspection   | 30-31 January 2007   |          |           |