

Radleys Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104207
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	308542
Inspection dates	16–17 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Veness
Headteacher	Lynne Caley
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2004
School address	Kings Road Rushall Walsall WS4 1JJ
Telephone number	01922 721383
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The pupils at Radleys Primary School are predominantly from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below that found nationally, whereas the proportion of those eligible for free school meals is above average. More pupils join the school in all year groups than is usual in most schools. The majority of children start in the Nursery with a narrower range of skills and knowledge than those usually seen in pupils of this age, especially in their language development. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are taught together in the Foundation Stage Unit. A new headteacher took up post in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Radleys Primary is a satisfactory school that provides a sound education for its pupils. It is improving rapidly under the good leadership of the headteacher. She has stimulated in all staff a strong focus on raising standards and in creating a school to be proud of. One member of staff commented on the shared enthusiasm and passion for the school to succeed. Although the headteacher and senior leadership team have only been in place for eight months, many initiatives have been introduced which are already having a positive impact on various aspects of school life. They are being implemented successfully but evidence is not available to show an impact on standards, which are broadly average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall but this, too, is improving, especially in English, where there is a strong focus on the teaching of reading. Standards in mathematics are below average and pupils' progress in the subject lags behind English and science. Boys in Years 3 to 6 do not achieve as well as the girls in many aspects of their learning. The school is aware of the problem and has started to introduce different styles of teaching and more practical tasks to ensure that boys are more fully engaged and interested in their activities.

Teaching is satisfactory overall and the proportion of good teaching is increasing as teachers' expectations for pupils' good progress rises and pupils are given a good understanding of how to improve. Activities are satisfactorily matched to pupils' abilities but the more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged so that they make good progress. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons. They behave well and enjoy taking responsibility around the school. Pupils were enthusiastic about their roles, as school councillors, for example, and they explained that the new 'Safety Patrol' had made a huge difference to their enjoyment of playtimes. There are fewer disagreements and the new behaviour policy has ensured that all pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Pupils' good personal development reflects the good levels of pastoral care provided by the staff. One parent's comments were typical of many when they wrote, 'I really could not be happier with the care my daughter is receiving.'

The school is launching into a thorough review of the curriculum to ensure that activities fully meet pupils' learning needs. Many links are already made between subjects to make activities more meaningful and interesting but this is better planned for literacy than for mathematics. Information and communication technology (ICT) is taught satisfactorily but pupils have insufficient opportunities to use their ICT knowledge and skills to support their learning in other subjects.

The new senior leadership team has focused successfully on evaluating the school's provision and their accurate assessments drive school improvement. However many of the senior team are new to their roles and some management systems are new so overall leadership and management are satisfactory at present. The role of the governing body has significantly improved from the last inspection. They now work with staff effectively to plan for the future. Good progress has been made in many areas, including behaviour, teaching and in the procedures that support pupils' understanding of how to improve. There is a clear direction and a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter the Nursery with below average standards, especially in language. They make steady progress through the Unit to achieve standards that are a little below average when they enter Year 1. Progress in language development is accelerating this year because of the positive focus on developing children's ability to link letters and sounds. All staff promote children's personal and emotional development well so they grow in confidence and enjoy learning. There is a sound balance of teacher-led tasks and opportunities for children to make independent choices about their own activities. Sometimes, opportunities to extend children's vocabulary and the range of children's thinking are missed but overall teaching is satisfactory. Curriculum planning ensures a secure foundation in the basic skills of reading and writing and early mathematical skills, and children's learning is enhanced by a good number of visits and additional activities. The space available in the Unit is limited but well used. The outside area reflects the range of activities in the classroom and provides a safe area in which children can play.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use and consolidate their knowledge and skills of mathematics so that standards rise.
- Ensure that the more able pupils are consistently provided with activities that extend their skills and challenge their ideas.
- Ensure that the curriculum meets the learning needs of all pupils, especially the boys, and that more opportunities are provided to use ICT skills to support learning in other subjects.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Although achievement across the school is satisfactory, pupils often make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Standards are broadly average across the school but below average in mathematics because pupils make slower progress in this subject than in reading, writing and science. An above average proportion of pupils join the school in all classes, particularly in Years 3 to 6, and this often affects school standards. In the national tests in 2007, standards in Year 6 were below average because of the larger than usual number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in that class. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are provided with modified work in class make similar progress to their peers but often reach lower standards than those attained nationally by pupils with similar abilities. Those pupils who are often taught in small groups and given an effective range of additional support make the best progress of all pupils in the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are proud of their school. They have good attitudes to work and this shows in their good behaviour. Pupils are friendly and get on well with each other. They enjoy school and attendance is broadly average. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are

developing a satisfactory understanding of how to stay safe and be healthy but still regularly eat crisps and chocolate in their packed lunches. Pupils make a strong contribution to the life of the school and are proud of their duties in class and as school monitors like the 'play leaders' and the school council, who take an active part in deciding which charities will be supported each year. Older pupils are developing a good awareness of citizenship. Many wrote to support their local library when it was threatened with closure and others wrote to the police about the effects of having equipment stolen from their classroom. Basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are sound and pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The pace of most lessons is brisk and the activities well structured so that pupils understand what to do. All teachers seek to match work to pupils' prior attainment, but not all activities are sufficiently challenging, especially for the more able pupils. Teaching assistants show great confidence in their roles and carry them out effectively, especially in the support of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This support is at its best in small group sessions when the tasks are well focused on pupils' specific difficulties. Activities are not always sufficiently well planned to meet their needs in whole-class sessions. Teachers' marking of pupils' work provides praise for successful effort and sets out areas for improvement. Pupils understand the new process and say they find it really helpful. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and strategies to maintain good attention and behaviour are well established. Most pupils try hard and want to do well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and appropriately balanced but until recently little has been done to ensure it really meets all pupils' learning needs. Staff are now focusing on ways of developing a more creative curriculum that stimulates pupils' greater interest and motivation to learn. Positive changes to the range of visits and visitors are ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to attend and that there is a strong stimulus for the learning in class. Good links are made between many subjects and pupils' learning in English, but there has been less development in planning to ensure pupils' mathematics skills are used and consolidated in other subjects. There is no room at present for a computer suite and equipment is limited. This reduces the opportunities for pupils to regularly use their ICT skills to support their learning in other subjects. Parents and pupils are delighted, however, with the wide range of after school clubs that have recently been introduced and are enjoyed by many pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral and personal care is good. Pupils feel safe and parents are confident that their children are well looked after. Rigorous vetting procedures, risk assessments and health and safety policies are used well. The school encourages regular attendance and works closely with the educational welfare officer to discourage those families who repeatedly take holidays in term time. The school is successful in meeting pupils' social and emotional needs. There is a new behaviour policy which is working effectively to encourage those who find consistently good

behaviour difficult to maintain. Those new to the school are well supported so they settle well. Effective links with outside agencies ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are also well supported. Individual educational plans are of good quality and are used effectively in work with learning support staff. Academic guidance is also good. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate how well they are learning and to work towards personal targets that set out the next stages of learning. These targets are used consistently in all classes alongside class goals which focus on specific weaknesses identified in English, mathematics and science.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Many parents have commented on the improvements made by the new headteacher. One parent wrote, 'I feel that the school has come on in leaps and bounds. All the changes have been for the good of the children.' This positive improvement is due to the school's accurate self-evaluation, which has led to the setting of clear priorities. A satisfactory system for tracking pupils' progress is already in place but the school recognises that it needs further development to be fully effective in the identification of weaknesses in learning of different groups of pupils. Management responsibilities have been deployed effectively and all staff feel they have ownership of the school's priorities. As a result, senior and middle leaders and managers are beginning to develop the skills that are needed to support the headteacher in effectively leading and monitoring the new initiatives. There is an improving picture in the role that the governors play in the school. They had a clear view of what was required in the appointment of the headteacher and recruitment of a new deputy headteacher and are becoming increasingly well informed and involved in developing school priorities.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 April 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Radleys Primary School, Walsall, WS4 1JJ

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you. You are rightly proud of the way your school is improving. It is providing you with a sound education and many aspects of your school are good. Here is a summary of what we found out.

- You make sound progress and most of you reach the standards expected.
- You behave well, and you appreciate the work of the Safety Patrol in helping children to sort out problems.
- You enjoy your activities and try to do your best.
- Teaching is satisfactory, many of your lessons are planned well and you find many of your activities enjoyable.
- There is an increasing range of activities outside of lessons that you can enjoy.
- All staff look after you well and support you in your learning.
- The headteacher leads your school well.

These are the things that we would like to see improved.

- Ensure that you have more opportunities to develop your knowledge and skills in mathematics so standards rise.
- Ensure that those of you who learn quickly are given lots of opportunities to extend your skills and ideas.
- To make sure your tasks help all of you, especially the boys to learn well, and to make good use of your ICT skills to support your work in other subjects.

Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful. Remember, you can help to make your school even better by continuing to work hard and to do your best.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Callaghan Lead inspector

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Yours sincerely

Mrs Callaghan
Lead inspector