

Radwinter Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115191
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	311873
Inspection date	9 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Susan Aldridge

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	66
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	1
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Bright
Headteacher	Mr Melvyn Catton
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	1 January 1900
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspectedNot previously inspected
School address	Water Lane Radbwinter Saffron Walden Essex CB10 2TX
Telephone number	01799 599248
Fax number	01799 599028
Age group	4-11
Inspection date	9 October 2008
Inspection number	311873

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress made by pupils, the quality of provision for the most able pupils including those who are gifted and talented, the procedures for promoting community cohesion and the quality of governance. Evidence was gathered from first-hand observations during a school day, discussions with pupils, staff and governors and a scrutiny of the school's documents including assessment data and parental questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail.

Description of the school

Radwinter CofE Primary School is a small school that serves the villages of Radwinter and Hempstead, although some pupils come from further afield. Numbers have fallen in the last two years when large groups of Year 6 pupils left and new intakes to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) were small. Children's knowledge and skills vary widely on entry to the Reception year. Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number are from European countries, including those who are Polish and are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The percentage with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than in most schools. In the main, these pupils have moderate learning difficulties; a very small number have autism. The school's work has been recognised by the Healthy Schools Award and Sportsmark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Radwinter CofE Primary School is a good school with outstanding features. It provides good value for money. Parents are delighted with the provision that the school makes for their children. One aptly described it as, 'a lovely nurturing village school with a real community feel'. Its family ethos is most striking and stems from the headteacher's strong leadership in creating a welcoming and harmonious environment. Pastoral care and relationships are excellent and pupils of all ages get on exceptionally well together because they are encouraged to look after one another and understand and respect differences between people. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and all it has to offer, and this is reflected in above average attendance and wide participation in after-school clubs.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their spiritual, moral and social understanding is effectively developed. Even though pupils have few opportunities to mix with culturally diverse children of their age, their cultural awareness is fostered well through subjects such as French, which is taught most skilfully to all pupils, art, geography and religious education. The headteacher and staff provide excellent role models and pupils show a maturity beyond their years. Behaviour is excellent. The school's outstanding curriculum provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to develop as young citizens. They enthusiastically take on responsibilities for a large number of jobs in school, such as 'buddies' and playground leaders. The school mirrors society's democratic principles when pupils give a presentation to their peers and elections are held for positions as school councillors and house captains,. There are strong links with the local church and community. Pupils contribute very well through dramatic and musical performances, running stalls at fetes, and raising funds for charities, which include a shelter for the homeless and a school in Africa. They also recycle waste materials and several have recently signed up to the Essex Green Pledge.

There are very good opportunities in the curriculum that enable pupils to both learn about and practise leading a healthy lifestyle. A nutritious lunch is served each day and pupils select a balanced meal from the choices available. Those who bring lunchboxes also eat a healthy meal. A most productive partnership with a local secondary school adds to the school's provision, the excellent range of after-school clubs in particular. Many pupils take part in sporting activities and a well stocked trophy cabinet in the entrance shows that they are often successful in competitions. Pupils know very well how to keep safe and demonstrate this with their thoughtful behaviour and careful handling of tools such as glue guns.

Whatever their capabilities, children get a good start in the EYFS because the provision is good. Similarly, boys and girls of all ages and abilities make good progress and achieve well and, as a result, they are well prepared for the demands of secondary school. Standards have varied widely from year to year at the end of Key Stage 1. In 2008, they were average. In most years recently, standards by the end of Key Stage 2 have been above average. In 2008, while results are yet finally to be confirmed, they show pupils are likely to be well above average in English, mathematics and science. In 2007, standards were above average overall and well above average in mathematics and science. These good standards show pupils have achieved well. Their good progress is associated with the good quality of teaching and learning and pupils' positive attitudes to learning. They are confident learners, largely because they have such good relationships with adults. They show interest and enthusiasm and apply themselves diligently. They ask thoughtful questions and show a good capacity for working independently, becoming

absorbed in their work. Because they get on so well together, they help one another and learn from each other.

Teachers plan well which ensures that pupils have tasks that are appropriate for their ages and provide a suitable challenge for all abilities. Teachers make sure that pupils know what they are learning about and, as pupils get older, teaching successfully encourages them to evaluate their work and that of others. Marking is very thorough; it is affirming, and provides pupils with suggestions and reminders. Pupils say that they find it very helpful in improving their work. Pupils have suitable targets for literacy and numeracy too. They know their literacy targets very well, but are less sure of their numeracy targets which are too numerous. Pupils' books show a good match between their individual literacy targets and work set, but in numeracy this is not the case.

For pupils who have particular gifts and talents there is good enrichment through the curriculum. Those with artistic, musical or sporting talents are encouraged to join clubs at school or in the community. For those with high attainment in basic skills, teachers provide extension work in class or group them with older pupils of similar ability for lessons. There are also workshops held at the local secondary school for these pupils. For pupils who find learning more difficult than most, there is good support from teaching assistants as well as a good range of additional activities to boost their attainment. Similarly, good support for pupils learning English ensures that they also make good progress.

The school's success is underpinned by good leadership and management. The school contributes well to community cohesion. For instance, it has a high profile in the local community, pupils participate well in community events such as the garden show, and the headteacher contributes regularly to the parish magazine. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection, including the development of formal monitoring and evaluation procedures and the effective use of a good system for tracking pupils' progress. Resources are well managed and targeted to secure necessary improvements. The internal and external environments have been much improved since the last inspection, including the addition of a new hall and kitchen. Self-evaluation is good and enables staff to correctly diagnose the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school evaluates itself as outstanding in all respects but is not quite there yet. It now has a good range of data to show how well pupils are doing, although by sometimes missing opportunities to measure the impact of provision, for instance, on the attainments of gifted and talented pupils, it falls short at times of being able to demonstrate the exceptional. By the same token, staff do not always analyse data well enough and present it in a form that assists governors in their evaluation of the school.

Leaders actively seek the views of stakeholders. In this respect, pupils have a good influence on school life as their suggestions and concerns are taken seriously. They have a direct link to the governors, who are most supportive and have a formal programme of school visits to check first-hand on its work. Governance has improved since the last inspection and is good, although governors are aware that they need to draw on the school's data more effectively and play their part in evaluating the school. All staff have several responsibilities and play their part well in monitoring and evaluating the school's work and planning further developments. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children quickly settle in the EYFS as the school works closely with parents and the pre-school in the area to support transition. In most instances, children's knowledge and skills on entry match expectations but occasionally they are above these. Because the teaching is good and children learn from older pupils in the same class, they achieve well. They make good progress and almost all exceed the early learning goals in all areas of learning. A few are working within National Curriculum levels, but the school does not have a clear analysis of the extent of this to support its evaluation of the quality of the EYFS. Dwindling numbers in the last two years have made it difficult for the school to provide a distinctly different curriculum for what are occasionally very small numbers of children who share a class with pupils in Years 1 and 2. Governors are considering reducing two intakes to one each year in an attempt to ensure larger numbers of children start together. Small numbers mean that there are rather more teacher-led sessions, although good use is made of the covered outdoor area to provide less formal activities, where children can choose activities and initiate some themselves, such as setting up a 'flower shop'. A skilled higher level teaching assistant provides good support as well as intervening to encourage learning. Children in the EYFS benefit from the same excellent levels of care and welfare as others in the school. They are clearly secure, very happy and thriving in school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils have a small number of mathematics targets, that they know their targets and that suitable work is set to enable them to achieve these.
- Strengthen school self-evaluation by
- utilising all opportunities to measure the impact of the school's actions and
- analysing data and presenting it in such a way that governors are able to play their part in school self-evaluation.

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
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
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	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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**Annex A**

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

10 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Radwinter CofE Primary School, Saffron Walden, CB10 2TX

Thank you all for welcoming us so warmly to your school. A special thanks to those who talked to us about school life. We thoroughly enjoyed our day.

We found that yours is a good school. It also has some outstanding features. We were very struck by the wonderful family atmosphere and the way that you all get on so well together. This makes your school a very pleasant place and many of your parents have said how much they appreciate this feature of the school. We were pleased to hear how much you all enjoy coming to school, and as a result your attendance is good. We were most impressed by all of you because your behaviour is excellent and you are so keen to learn. You eat very healthily at school and many of you take a great deal of exercise. I got some really good answers to my questions about keeping safe. We could see that you behave sensibly in the playground and in class. You do a large number of useful jobs, which you take seriously, and which help the school and community. In particular, older pupils look after younger ones very well and you raise money for a good number of charities, including some abroad.

You are all making good progress because the teaching is good. You work hard and enjoy learning. You reach good standards in your work by Year 6. This will help you when you move on to secondary school.

Mr Catton, the staff and governors know what they need to do to make your school even better. We have asked them to do two main things. They are going to make sure that you have fewer targets for mathematics and know what these are. They will also give you the right sort of work to help you reach these targets. They are going to measure as many improvements as they possibly can and give this information to the governors so that they can be more involved in supporting the school to become even better. You can help with improvement too, by keeping up the good work and remembering your targets. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Aldridge

Lead inspector