

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Radbrook Primary School

Calverton Way, Bank Farm Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 6DZ

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 May 2025

Outcome

Radbrook Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Emma Thelwell. This school is part of Severn Bridges Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Andrew Morris, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Pat Wilcox.

What is it like to attend this school?

Radbrook Primary School is an inclusive school at the centre of its community. The school has high aspirations for all pupils to 'be the best you can be'. This vision is being realised. Pupils achieve well, particularly pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Many parents and carers agree. One parent's comment was typical of many when they stated that staff are 'driven by what is best for the children of Radbrook and everyone works tirelessly for their benefit'.

Pupils learn and live by the school's rules of 'ready, respectful, safe'. They behave well in lessons and at social times. Those pupils who need support with their behaviour receive it. Calm spaces such as 'the sunshine room' and 'the hub' make sure that they get the help they need.

Pupils are taught the school's 'Darwin values'. These include 'selfhelpability', 'stickability' and 'changeability'. They say, rightly, that these skills 'help us grow as people and understand how to behave in different situations'. Pupils eagerly take on leadership roles. School councillors, the safety squad and eco reps make meaningful contributions to school life. Pupils in Year 6 are all 'VIPs'. They develop their skills and interests by providing information technology support to their peers and helping the school caretaker look after the school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has constructed a well-thought-out curriculum. Since the previous inspection, the trust has worked closely with the school to ensure the curriculum builds pupils' knowledge in a logical order. The curriculum considers the mixed-age classes many pupils are taught in. It has a firm foundation in the early years. For each subject the school has identified the important 'need to know' knowledge that it expects pupils to learn. In many subjects, such as mathematics and English, teachers focus closely on this important knowledge in lessons. However, in other subjects, curriculums, while ambitious, are not yet fully realised. At times, staff do not always focus closely enough on the most important knowledge pupils need to learn. When this happens, pupils do not learn as well as they could.

The school identifies pupils with SEND quickly. Often, this is when children join the school in the early years. Staff provide effective support to help pupils to access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Where necessary, pupils with SEND receive specific work to ensure they learn the important foundational knowledge that they need.

Teachers carry out checks on pupils' learning over time. In English and mathematics, staff use effective checks to identify how well pupils are learning important knowledge. However, checks on learning in other subjects do not identify how well pupils are learning or reveal gaps in knowledge quickly enough. As a result, teachers do not always identify pupils who need additional help. This slows their learning.

The school teaches pupils to read successfully. Staff skilfully follow the school's phonics programme. From Reception, children learn about letters and the sounds that they represent. Pupils who find reading difficult are supported well to keep up with their peers. They use their phonics knowledge to read with increasing fluency and accuracy as they progress through key stage 1. Older pupils become confident readers who enjoy a wide range of books and authors.

Clear routines and high expectations for pupils' behaviour are well established from the early years. Staff remind pupils of the importance of 'wonderful walking' and 'super sitting'. The school has made pupils' attendance a key priority. It has a clear picture of pupils' individual circumstances, including the reasons which may be barriers to regular attendance. The school has a range of systems in place to support and challenge issues with attendance. This work is making a positive difference.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development is impressive. Pupils work towards 'Darwin awards' each year. This begins in the pre-school and includes children taking part in activities such as charity fundraising, team building activities and caring for the environment. A well-designed range of wider experiences deepens pupils' academic learning. For example, pupils can recall how a trip to a flax mill enabled them to understand what life was like for workers during the industrial revolution. Pupils also benefit from a range of clubs that are changed regularly to match their talents and interests.

Governors use their considerable and varied experiences to contribute to the school's ongoing development. They provide a balance of support and challenge to hold the school to account. The trust supports the school effectively in its drive to continue to improve further. Staff appreciate the steps that the school has taken to reduce unnecessary workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school has not ensured that staff are supported to teach subject curriculums as intended. As a result, pupils are not consistently well supported to learn the most important knowledge that they need. The school should ensure that staff know how to deliver these curriculums effectively so that pupils securely understand and retain important concepts before moving on to new content, allowing them to deepen their knowledge over time.
- In some subjects, the school does not identify how well pupils are learning, or any gaps in knowledge, quickly enough. This means teachers do not always know when pupils are stuck, have gaps in their learning or need additional help. The school should ensure that all teachers know how to check learning in their subjects systematically so that they can identify pupils who need further support.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Radbrook Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	144203
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10344131
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	329
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Pat Wilcox
CEO of the trust	Andrew Morris
Headteacher	Emma Thelwell
Website	www.radbrook.shropshire.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is part of Severn Bridges Multi-Academy Trust, which consists of five schools.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has opened a pre-school provision for children aged three to four years old.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders, groups of staff and pupils.
- The inspector met with members of the trust and local governing body, including the chair of the trust and chair of the local governing body. The inspector held a meeting with the CEO and deputy CEO of the trust.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also spoke to pupils about their work.
- The inspector heard pupils in key stage two read.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. He also took into consideration the online staff and pupil surveys. The inspector spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Barry Yeadsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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