

Springside

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135200
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	381833
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2012
Lead inspector	Hilary Ward

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Schofield
Headteacher	Jane Herring
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Hilary Ward
Jane Alexander

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 13 lessons taught by 10 teachers. A range of interventions and therapies delivered by specialist professionals, by teachers and by teaching assistants were also seen. Meetings were held with staff, with members of the governing body, including a parent governor, with the home-school link worker, the headteacher of the co-located mainstream primary school and specialist professionals. Inspectors took account of the 44 parent and carer questionnaire responses along with those returned from staff and pupils. Inspectors looked at the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but insufficient responses were available to show results for this school. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a variety of documents including pupils' work, pupil progress data, the school improvement plan, curriculum evidence, attendance and safeguarding information.

Information about the school

Springside School provides for pupils who have a wide range of special educational needs including severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties, autism spectrum conditions, complex communication difficulties, social and emotional behaviour difficulties and sensory impairments, usually in combinations of complex needs. Pupils are mainly drawn from the east and central parts of the local authority and all have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than the average. More than half of pupils are from minority-ethnic backgrounds, for most of whom English is an additional language. A small number of pupils are in the care of the local authority.

Springside is co-located with a mainstream primary school with whom many resources such as the staffroom, hall and dining room are shared. The school holds a number of awards such as the Bronze award for School Council in collaboration with their co-located school, the Green Eco Flag award, Bronze Sing Up, Rochdale Extended Schools' Award and National Healthy School status.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key Findings

- Springside School provides an outstanding quality of education for its pupils.
- The responses to the inspection questionnaires show that parents and carers are predominantly extremely pleased with the education their children receive. Strong partnerships with pupils' families contribute very effectively to their learning.
- Achievement is outstanding. Staff have high expectations for each and every pupil and work highly effectively in teams to ensure all pupil needs are met, including their communication, academic, physical, personal, social and emotional development.
- Teaching is outstanding so that pupils make excellent progress through programmes which are tailored to their individual needs in an equally outstanding and innovative curriculum. Teams use their knowledge and assessment of pupils well to plan sessions but senior leaders recognise that there are further improvements which could be made to identify even more precisely what they want each child to learn in every lesson or programme.
- Teachers and teaching assistants very effectively promote the development of pupils' independent achievements. This begins in the Early Years Foundation Stage and is an effective focus for development throughout the school.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher, senior managers and the governing body constantly seek ways to improve the provision to meet the complex needs of the pupils at the school. They seek the views of all stakeholders to contribute to school improvement planning.
- Partnerships with other schools, including the co-located primary school, are very strong and mutually supportive. They provide excellent opportunities for

inclusion, enrichment of the curriculum and shared staff development. They ensure the assessment of pupil progress is moderated very effectively.

- Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school. They work hard in lessons and are very proud of their achievements. They behave exceptionally well and are supported very effectively to learn to self-manage their behaviours.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the already high quality of assessment by:
 - even more clearly specifying the learning outcome for individual pupils in each lesson or for each taught programme
 - continuing to develop the work already started to find ways to help pupils understand how well they are doing.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The cognitive ability of pupils is such that they are highly unlikely to reach nationally expected standards. However, the school's excellent monitoring of progress, through regular and frequent assessments, shows that pupils make rapid and sustained improvements in all areas of their learning, often from very low starting points. Progress is particularly strong in areas of communication and personal and social development where children entering the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to an excellent start. In lessons, they develop a joy for learning through the carefully structured and innovative programmes which promote their independent learning skills. Once pupils have acquired the building blocks for learning they make accelerated progress and this is demonstrated by even more rapid progress through Key Stage 2.

Pupils' personalised learning programmes are tailor made to meet their particular needs and incorporate interventions and therapies which ensure they make the maximum progress they can in all areas of their development. The more-able pupils acquire reading and writing skills at a rapid rate and understand the content and structure of their books. They learn to use their number skills in practical ways, perhaps through weighing ingredients for food technology or by counting how many dinners are needed. Pupils are confident users of the information and communication technology in the classroom and enjoy being given responsibility to change programmes and find information. Where pupils occasionally fail to reach the school's ambitious targets, the reasons are investigated and interventions quickly put in place to get them back on track. This ensures that all groups of pupils make equally very rapid progress. Since the last inspection, the school has been trying different ways to help pupils understand how well they are doing and how to improve their work and are continuing to develop this.

Some pupils can talk knowledgeably about how well they are doing and are proud to show their work. Of the parents and carers who returned the questionnaire, 97%

agreed that they feel their child makes good progress. One parent typified the views of many with the comment, 'He is progressing really well and is very happy at school; the smile on his face when he gets back says it all.'

Quality of teaching

Staff at Springside School share the highest of aspirations for their pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants work exceptionally well as teams to manage classes of pupils with a range of complex needs. Pupils' personalised programmes include whole-class, individual and small-group work, communication, physiotherapy, health sessions and other interventions and therapies to meet their individual needs. As the Chair of the Governing Body, who is herself a parent, put it, 'It all works like a perfectly executed dance.'

A hundred per cent of pupils who were able to complete a questionnaire said that they think they are taught well, and all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agreed. The school gives particular priority to high quality professional development of its staff and this underpins the outstanding teaching and support provided for pupils. Teaching assistants are exceptionally skilful in knowing how much support to provide to enable pupils to develop new knowledge and skills, yet throughout the inspection they were also seen to encourage pupils to do things for themselves. This is possible because relationships between staff and pupils are warm and trusting.

Individual Education Plans are reviewed frequently and pupils' targets are reflected in lesson planning. Although class teams assess pupils' achievements rigorously and share an understanding of the progress they expect pupils to make, the small step learning outcomes for individuals in every session are not always clearly stated in the session plans.

Teachers and teaching assistants are exceptionally skilful at planning work and activities which maintain pupils' interest and attention, usually through small bursts of activities. They constantly question pupils' understanding and participation in lessons and adapt their approach in the light of their responses. Staff are highly imaginative in thinking of ways to help pupils understand and develop concepts. For example, in a lesson in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children were wrapped in foil and blankets to generate warmth and simulate a cake being cooked in the oven. Pupils throughout Key Stage 1 follow an Early Years Foundation Stage model, with an excellent balance of child-led and adult-led activities, which meets their needs particularly well. The teaching of early literacy and numeracy skills permeates all lessons, often in a very practical way. Pupils are introduced to a phonics programme that has been adapted to ensure each pupil makes the best progress they can in reading.

Every lesson incorporates aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils develop in confidence and respect for themselves and each other through the therapeutic curriculum and because staff act as excellent role models. Shared lessons and projects with pupils from the co-located and other primary schools develops a tolerance and understanding of each other and creates enhanced curriculum opportunities for both sets of pupils. Assemblies, interventions,

drama, music and sensory work all contribute to pupils' excellent spiritual and cultural development. During the inspection a visit by 'Zoo Lab' had pupils enthralled as they were able to touch and look at animals they would never normally encounter.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

No concerns about bullying or safety were expressed by parents and carers or by pupils in the questionnaires returned. Through a range of excellent positive interventions such as Dinosaur School, a programme aimed at raising self-esteem, one-to-one support, partnerships with other agencies, therapeutic inclusion, peer massage, every effort is made to ensure pupils thrive in an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance. This is enhanced by the school's co-located setting and links with other schools which enables pupils to enjoy the mutually supportive and cohesive community.

Behaviour over time is outstanding. Through the innovative programmes, pupils quickly learn social skills such as sharing, turn-taking and listening respectfully to each other and they learn how to keep themselves safe. They are encouraged to think about the impact of their actions on themselves and others through the work of Dinosaur School and in therapeutic sessions aimed at building self-esteem and emotional well-being. Because of their particular special educational needs, some pupils can occasionally present with incidents of challenging behaviour but the very well-trained staff are highly skilled at managing behaviour to minimise the impact on the learning and well-being of others and to enable the pupil concerned to quickly return to lessons. During their time in the school pupils are supported to learn the skills they need to self-manage their behaviours.

The governing body ensures high standards of safety in the exciting learning environment to reduce the risks to pupils. Strategies have been put in place which have improved attendance significantly over the last few years, particularly through the highly effective appointment of a bilingual home-school link worker. She makes phone calls and home visits to families and takes work to pupils who are likely to be absent, and this has contributed significantly to improved attendance. Although attendance is slightly below the average for mainstream primary schools nationally, absences are almost always due to medical conditions or appointments for the many vulnerable pupils.

Leadership and management

The school is outstandingly effective largely due to the aspirational leadership of the headteacher. She is pivotal in drawing together the varied composition and expertise of the members of the governing body and the skills, knowledge and experience of the senior leaders and managers. Together they have built on the strengths found at the last inspection to continually improve the school so that it provides an exceptionally high quality of education to each and every one of its pupils.

Membership of the governing body has been strengthened over the last few years and reflects the needs of the school very well. As a result it is able to support and challenge the school exceptionally well, including promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. It ensures safeguarding meets all requirements and is

given the highest priority. All stakeholders contribute to accurate and honest self-evaluation so that the school has a very clear view of what it wants to do and an excellent capacity to improve even further. The school's leaders also look outwards to the highly effective partnerships they have with other special and mainstream schools and with a range of other professionals and other agencies which make a significant contribution to pupils' holistic needs, the monitoring of standards, the enrichment of the curriculum and staff development.

The quality of teaching and learning is rigorously monitored and informs professional development of the staff, always with a focus on continually improving outcomes for pupils. Staff say they feel supported and are proud to work at this happy school where morale is very high. The curriculum is outstanding. It is innovative and provides a huge range of opportunities for pupils to develop literacy and numeracy skills and enjoy experiences indoors, outdoors, in the local community, through cultural visits and by joint projects with other special and mainstream schools. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It is threaded through all aspects of the school's work.

Links with parents and carers are very strong. The bilingual home-school link worker has been especially effective in bringing parents and carers into school and involving them in their child's learning. Support for parents and carers through workshops, coffee mornings, home visits and especially at times of transition is excellent and much appreciated. One parent commented, 'They have lots of sessions in which parents are involved and welcomed.'

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



20 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Springside, Rochdale OL16 2SU

Thank you for welcoming my colleague and myself to your school recently. We were so impressed by the many things we saw, and found that your school gives you an outstanding education. Thank you to all those pupils who talked to us about how much you enjoy coming to school and about what you are learning. We enjoyed looking at your work.

Your teachers, teaching assistants and therapists take great care to make sure your lessons and the other programmes you take part in are exactly suited to your particular needs. You all said that you feel safe in school and it was clear that you learn to like and get on with each other and that you have really warm relationships with the staff. You quickly learn to do things for yourselves but know you can ask for help if you need it. Your behaviour is outstanding because you enjoy your lessons and adults help you to learn how to manage difficult situations. You take part in some exciting projects, sometimes with other schools. I could see that you enjoyed looking at and touching the amazing animals that came to visit you from the 'Zoo Lab'.

The headteacher and staff are always looking for ways to make Springside even better. I have asked them to be very clear about what they want each of you to learn in lessons or programmes and to share that with you. I know that the school is already working with you to find ways to help you understand how well you are doing and what you can do even better.

Thank you again for your kindness and enthusiasm. It was easy to see how proud you are of Springside School.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Ward
Lead inspector

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