

# Springfield House Community Special School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	103623
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	376937
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Susan Lewis

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	65
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Julie Walker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janet Collins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 November 2008
<b>School address</b>	Kenilworth Road Knowle Solihull B93 0AJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01564 775696
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<b>Residential provision</b>	Springfield House Community Special School
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SCO42411
<b>Social care inspector</b>	Dawn Bennett

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<b>Age group</b>	5–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	7–8 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	376937



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Susan Lewis	Additional inspector
Russell Hinton	Additional inspector
Dawn Bennett	Social care inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons led by 10 different teachers for a total of six and a half hours. They heard pupils read and talked with them about their work. They also observed activities and meals in the school's boarding provision. Inspectors held meetings with senior staff, care staff within the residential setting, coordinators of subjects such as information and communication technology and English, and members of the governing body. They talked with parents and carers and with pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including the data the school holds about pupils' progress, its self-evaluation, school development planning, and safeguarding documents and practices. Inspectors scrutinised 24 parental questionnaires and 64 returned by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

This is a small residential special school for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and the large majority have identified additional learning needs, such as autistic spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity or other similar conditions. Before joining the school, pupils' education has typically been disrupted by poor attendance or exclusion from previous schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very high. Boys significantly outnumber girls. The large majority of pupils are White British with those from mixed and Afro-Caribbean heritages being the next largest groups. Pupils come from all over Birmingham local authority but also from neighbouring authorities, such as Warwickshire and Solihull. Almost all pupils are transported to and from school.

The school has boarding accommodation for up to sixteen pupils. At the time of the inspection, eleven pupils were in residence for between two and four nights per week.

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. All groups of pupils, including boys and girls and those with different special educational needs, achieve extremely well. This is because the teaching is outstanding overall.
- Staff know each pupil’s needs very well and plan lessons that are usually very well targeted on next steps in learning for each pupil. They are expert in behaviour management, and the very rich and relevant curriculum enthuses pupils and re-engages them in learning. Just occasionally, for example in the whole class part of a lesson, the work does not challenge everyone and is too hard or too easy for a few.
- Leadership and management at all levels are excellent and have created an excellent ethos for learning. Leaders analyse the school’s data rigorously to make sure that every pupil has the opportunity to succeed and make up ground they have lost due to their previous difficulties.
- Strategies to raise pupils’ self-esteem and to promote improvements in their ability to manage their own behaviour are very effective. Although some pupils may display challenging behaviour associated with their learning difficulties and/or emotional needs, pupils make rapid improvement in their behaviour from as soon as they enter the school. Parents praise the improvement in their child’s achievement and behaviour and are confident their child is safe. They say, for example, ‘My child has been transformed,’ and that, ‘The school has given me hope for my child’s future’.
- The residential provision is outstanding and makes an outstanding contribution to pupils’ personal development and achievements and progress in school. This is because school and residential staff work so closely together to ensure pupils feel very safe and have many opportunities to take part in clubs and visits and to try out new skills.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase further the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that the pace and challenge in every part of lessons is appropriate for pupils of all abilities.

## **Main report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

The school's data demonstrate that the vast majority of pupils make outstanding progress during their time at the school from very low starting points on entry. Inspectors' observations confirmed such outstanding progress, particularly in areas such as communication, reading and mathematics, and personal, social and emotional development. Although pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain lower than others of their age, the gap is narrowed because pupils' progress is so strongly promoted. Pupils make rapid and sustained development because the school assesses them carefully on entry, plans their next steps carefully with pupils and their families, and ensures that everyone works together towards these. Pupils know that their lessons will be interesting and that they are 'learning lots'. One said, 'I couldn't read at my old school but I can read anything I want to now'. Pupils make outstanding progress in their reading, including in their phonics (the sounds that letters make) work, because teachers and support assistants provide systematic support for these skills. In addition, there are many opportunities for these to be practised, for example in following recipes in food technology and 'Let's get cooking' or in planning activities in the residence. Pupils are particularly proud of their 'exciting writing folders' which demonstrate their excellent progress from when they entered the school. They read back this work with confidence.

Pupils know their targets and explained them clearly to inspectors. They settle down to write readily, and try hard to follow the guidance given by their teachers about how to make their writing more interesting. Progress in mathematics is similarly outstanding because the school provides systematic support for pupils' calculation skills but also presents them with very practical number problems to solve. The ready availability of netbooks ensures pupils achieve extremely well in information and communication technology. In Year 2, they use a music programme to explore the different properties of instruments, moving smoothly between the different icons and adjusting the volume. Skills for independent learning and living are very well supported. Parents and carers are particularly appreciative of the progress pupils make in managing their emotions and in developing their social skills, commenting that this is because of the way such behaviour is modelled and responded to by staff. The school's records show that pupils make considerable strides in their attitudes to school and to other people.

### **Quality of teaching**

Outstanding teaching promotes outstanding learning and progress throughout the school. All teaching observed was at least good and a high proportion was outstanding. Comments from parents and carers were packed with superlatives such as 'brilliant' and 'wonderful' about how teachers cared for their child and promoted

learning. Many commented on how well staff involved them in their child's learning or helped them to solve problems at home as well as at school. Staff work extremely well together in class teams that deliver the core curriculum subjects highly effectively. This includes consistent support for pupils' social, emotional and behavioural needs. As a result, pupils quickly understand the high expectations that staff have for their behaviour and they respond to these. Ability grouping further ensures that the activities are closely matched to pupils' needs and that pupils are mostly challenged very well. Occasionally, particularly in the whole class part of a lesson, the work is too easy for higher-ability pupils and they are not challenged sufficiently.

Pupils know their targets and are constantly told how they are progressing towards these. Older pupils self-assess realistically as to how well they are doing towards their targets. The quality of teacher assessment is extremely high; teachers take careful account of each child's needs and individual education plan targets in group activities and through individual support. They carefully adjust targets and work as a result of pupils' learning in lessons. Learning is most effective when there is a practical element to the lesson in which pupils have to discover or apply new skills. This was particularly evident in the many different experiences provided through the enrichment activities, such as cooking, science club, sports activities, and making masks in art. Although pupils on entry may have few skills in working with others, as they progress through the school they become active team players because teachers plan group work carefully and set targets for such work in ways that pupils clearly understand.

Residential care staff make an outstanding contribution to the enriched curriculum in school, teaching elements such as first aid and food technology alongside school staff and supporting behaviour management. This holistic approach to the pupils' needs ensures that pupils get consistent messages about expectations and understand how well they are doing. It also ensures that pupils have many opportunities that contribute to their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The youngest pupils glow with pride, for example, as they share their work or read a short prayer in an excellent assembly; pupils sing with enthusiasm and celebrate their work. Staff ensure that there is plenty of time for pupils to ask questions and look closely at models, writing and drawings. Buddies effectively support younger or newer pupils when they first come into residence.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour is outstanding in both the residence and the school. The school records show that there are now few exclusions and the number of serious incidents decreases significantly in line with the length of time pupils spend at the school. It is clear that pupils enjoy school and, despite their difficult pasts, their attendance quickly improves. For example, one pupil's attendance has risen from under 70% to 100% last term. Attendance is rapidly improving because of the excellent work the school does with parents and carers and because of the ways in which the residential experience is used to support this. Pupils quickly learn to trust staff because they feel listened to and appreciate that their views are listened to with respect. When incidents do occur, staff have the necessary training for dealing with them and there are very careful reviews of how these are dealt with. The school has particularly

strong partnerships with a range of outside agencies and professionals and with families; these encourage good behaviour and positive learning attitudes and work very well indeed. Meticulous record keeping details any incidents and careful risk assessments are made. The tracking of pupils' behavioural and other targets ensures that staff all know pupils very well. Pupils say they feel safe and that when incidents do occur they know that staff will sort it out. They do not feel that bullying is an issue and say it does not happen very often. Excellent personal, social and health education ensures that pupils develop a very strong awareness of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They understand for example the dangers of social networking sites and of talking too readily to strangers. They know that they will keep themselves safer if they try hard to manage their own behaviour towards others when they are feeling angry or sad.

### **Leadership and management**

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding, including the leadership and management of the residence. The ambition that everyone within this school and the residence has for its pupils is palpable. Leaders have been tenacious in their pursuit of excellence at every level. Data is rigorously analysed and interventions put into place if any group or individual is seen not to be accelerating progress as quickly as they need to. The leadership of teaching and learning is excellent. Careful use of allocated staff training and of performance management targets has ensured that staff understand the challenges of the pupils in their class, their next steps in learning and that they plan highly effectively to provide for them. Governors and the leadership team have successfully managed changes in staffing because of retirement and have detailed succession planning in place. The introduction of the enrichment curriculum has enabled residential care staff and school staff to work even more closely together and this is exciting for both pupils and staff. The broad and relevant curriculum is outstanding because it meets pupils' needs very well indeed and prepares them extremely well for the next stage in their education. It also promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. Governance is outstanding. Governors have a range of highly relevant experience to bring to the school and fulfil their critical friend role extremely well. They show a deep understanding of what the school is achieving and what it needs to do to improve further.

Safeguarding procedures are robust and meet all current government requirements. They are regularly reviewed and developed to ensure that pupils' wellbeing stays at the centre of the school's practice. Staff training is thorough and risk assessments are detailed for both residential and school situations. The school's leaders actively seek ways in which they can make its premises and curriculum even more accessible and provide full equality of opportunity for all pupils. The school's capacity for further improvement is excellent. It has made highly effective progress since the last inspection in managing changes in the leadership team and staff effectively, and in developing the curriculum and assessment further so that its effectiveness remains outstanding.

### **Residential provision**

Pupils experience a highly effective residential experience that supports them to

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succeed as well as providing them with an enjoyable and social stay. Pupils make outstanding personal progress based on their assessed abilities and needs. Each child is supported by a team of experienced and highly motivated staff who have comprehensive knowledge of supporting and enabling pupils with the complexity of needs evidenced. Pupils’ individual education and behaviour plans are informed by detailed assessment and monitoring, and they make excellent progress towards these targets and those set within their reviews. Careful support enables all to ‘have a voice’ and to feel valued and listened to. Pupils’ suggestions for improvement are taken very seriously and acted upon promptly, whether these are about possible activities or their own targets. All this means that pupils improve measurably in their self-esteem and behaviour, as well as their academic studies.

Pupils’ safety is rigorously promoted at all times and is outstanding. The school is tenacious in trying to engage parents and carers, and has a home/school link adviser who facilitates and visits parents’ and carers’ groups. Staff are well informed and take appropriate actions to safeguard pupils’ welfare. They are highly skilled at managing inappropriate behaviour and promoting positive behaviour and communication, and follow the school’s agreed procedures rigorously. The leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding. The one recommendation made at the last inspection has been met and the school continues to improve safeguarding, quality of care and outcomes through comprehensive quality assurance systems and a detailed development plan. The provision is very carefully held to account by the senior leadership team and governing body.

### National minimum standards

- The school meets the national minimum standards of residential special schools.

*These are the grades for the residential provision*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the residential experience</b>	<b>1</b>
Outcomes for residential pupils	1
Quality of residential provision and care	1
Residential pupils’ safety	1
Leadership and management of the residential provision	1



## 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](http://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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.**



9 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Springfield House Community Special School, Knowle, B93 0AJ**

We did very much enjoy our visit to your school recently. Thank you so much to all of you for welcoming us into your classroom and into the Lodge. Thank you in particular to those of you who spoke with us and who read to us. It was good to hear how well you thought you were doing and how much you like your school. We think that you are lucky to go to Springfield House because it is an excellent school which is really helping you to make progress and to improve your behaviour. These are some of the things that we found out about your school.

- You make excellent progress because the teaching is excellent and the teachers give you such interesting things to do.
- You enjoy the enrichment activities such as when you do science, cooking, sports, art and Peacemobile and learn lots from these about how to work together and listen to each other.
- You all feel very safe in school and in the lodge and you know that if any squabbles do happen staff will sort them out fairly.
- The headteacher and the governors run the school very well and know exactly what needs to be done to make it even better.

We have asked Mrs Collins, the governors and the leadership team to do one thing that would help improve the school even more. This is to make sure that the work teachers give you to do is closely matched to your abilities so that each of you can learn as much as possible in all the different parts of every lesson.

You can help too by continuing to improve your behaviour and your attendance.

Yours sincerely

Susan Lewis  
Lead inspector

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