

Springfield Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112633
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	357151
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Kenneth Thomas

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joan Lane
Headteacher	Sue Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 11 teachers and saw 16 lessons. Inspectors observed a school assembly and held discussions with staff, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and the member with responsibility for safeguarding. They looked at pupils' books and viewed a wide range of documentation including: school policies, curriculum planning, self-evaluation information, improvement planning, safeguarding and welfare arrangements and records of pupils' progress. Questionnaires returned by 99 parents and carers, 161 pupils and 35 members of staff were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Is the upward trend in attainment being maintained, particularly that of girls?
- What is the impact of attendance on pupils' progress and what the school does to help pupils who have been absent for long periods of time to catch up?
- How well do teachers use assessment information to plan learning tasks that challenge and extend pupils of all abilities?
- Do leaders and managers at all levels have a realistic view of school strengths and weaknesses and the capacity to drive improvement?

Information about the school

This is a below average sized junior school with about the same numbers of boys and girls on roll. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-above average. Because part of school provision is an enhanced resource facility for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the proportion of these pupils and the proportion with a statement of special educational need are both high. The main categories of need mostly relate to autistic spectrum disorders or emotional and behavioural difficulties. Virtually all pupils are of White British heritage. Very few speak English as an additional language and all are fluent English language speakers. The school has gained national recognition for its work in several areas including National Healthy School status and the Activemark for physical education and exercise. The school provides before- and after-school clubs that are managed by the governing body. The headteacher was appointed in September 2010.

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: how good is the school?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

Main findings

Springfield Junior School provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. The school is justly proud of its inclusive nature and its place in the community. It is a welcoming school and one in which pupils feel valued because staff know them well and provide good levels of support. One particularly notable aspect of the school's care for individual pupils is the effective support provided for any who may be in vulnerable circumstances or have been absent for extended periods to ensure that they keep up with classmates. Parents and carers are generally pleased with the education and support the school provides. As one said, 'My child is happy and confident at school.' Several aspects of pupils' personal development, including their moral and social development, are good. Pupils' cultural understanding is less well developed because the curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for teachers to develop their understanding of the diversity of faiths and cultures in national and international contexts. A further strength is the good promotion of healthy lifestyles, which result in pupils participating in regular physical exercise and being knowledgeable about how to eat sensibly. Pupils are proud of their school and the vast majority behave well both in and out of lessons. However, some parents and carers express concerns about the sometimes challenging behaviour of a minority. While the school has a range of effective strategies to manage such behaviour, these are not always applied consistently or communicated well to parents and carers.

Attainment has risen over the last three years and is now broadly average. This reflects satisfactory achievement, given pupils' original starting points. Although in the most recent national tests a number of girls underachieved, inspection evidence and school assessment information show that this was an effect confined to a single year group, and that, currently, girls are making satisfactory progress. The attainment and progress of boys lags behind that of girls. Inconsistent teaching and learning are the main reasons that progress is satisfactory rather than better. Although more effective use is being made of assessment information to identify underperformance and provide targeted support, not enough use is being made of this information to provide suitably challenging work that matches the abilities of different groups of pupils. In many lessons, both pupils and teaching assistants are passively engaged for lengthy periods because teachers' introductions are too long. Also, what pupils are expected to learn is not always made clear enough and as a result activities given to them are not focused sharply on their learning. These weaknesses are also apparent in the enhanced resource facility for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the reason why the progress of these pupils is also no more than satisfactory.

The recently appointed headteacher, with good support from staff and the governing body, is giving clear direction to the school and more challenging targets are being set to secure further improvement. In order to further accelerate progress, particularly that of boys, all recognise the need to develop the curriculum to provide pupils with a broader

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and more engaging range of experiences that build more closely on previous learning and encourage the application of basic skills in more meaningful contexts. While school self-evaluation identifies the correct areas for improvement, the evaluation of some aspects is over-generous because it is not sufficiently focused on pupils' learning. While the governing body are involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, this is not sufficiently focused on measuring the impact of improvement initiatives. Procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and underpin the school's caring approach. The determination of the headteacher and staff to move the school forward, together with the improvements seen since the last inspection and the enthusiasm of staff and the governing body to tackle weaknesses, gives the school satisfactory capacity for continued improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make all teaching good or better to accelerate progress by ensuring that:
 - full use is made of assessment information to plan learning activities that are suitably challenging for all groups of pupils
 - pupils are actively engaged from the outset of lessons, know exactly what they are expected to learn and that this is checked at the end of lessons
 - teaching assistants are effectively deployed to fully support pupils' learning.
- Improve the curriculum by:
 - developing a more creative curriculum that builds on previous learning and promotes progression in the development of knowledge and skills
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in relevant and challenging ways in all subjects
 - broadening the range of opportunities for pupils to increase their understanding of the diversity of faiths and cultures in national and international contexts.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including that of the governing body, by ensuring that monitoring and evaluation are clearly focused on pupils' learning and the impact of strategies to raise attainment.
- Strengthen links with parents and carers so that they are fully involved in their children's learning and well informed about the implementation of school policies, particularly the consistency of the implementation of the school behaviour policy.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' work in lessons and in their workbooks indicates standards are generally as expected for their age at this stage of the academic year. It is clear that while the progress of pupils from all social backgrounds, including the few with minority ethnic heritage, is satisfactory overall, a minority make good progress. Pupils enjoy and achieve well in their learning when lessons are stimulating and engaging. In these lessons, their

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positive attitudes to learning contribute to the progress made. This was exemplified in a Year 4 numeracy lesson where pupils worked in groups using different methods of subtraction and took pleasure in sharing these with others. This picture is not consistent across the school and, consequently, progress is satisfactory rather than good. At times, lessons do not stimulate the pupils' interest or imagination and their efforts slacken.

Inspectors looked closely at pupils' behaviour as a number of pupils, parents and carers identified this as an area of concern. Observations of lessons and around the school show that behaviour is satisfactory and most pupils work happily together. Effective support is provided for pupils with autistic and emotional and behavioural difficulties and no instances of disruptive behaviour were seen. Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of how to avoid risks, whether on the internet or during journeys to and from school. As befits a school with National Healthy School status and the Activemark award, they understand that exercise and a balanced diet are vital to their healthy development. The school parliament provides a forum for pupils' voices and pupils contribute well to the school and wider community in other ways, for example, acting as playground leaders or raising money for worthwhile causes. Attendance although average, is adversely affected by absences for medical reasons. The average standards in basic skills and pupils' good collaborative abilities provide a satisfactory base for their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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How effective is the provision?

Good relationships between teachers and pupils form the basis of good class management in most lessons. In the very best lessons, pupils make good progress because learning tasks are well planned to meet the different learning needs of every pupil. In these lessons, pupils are given opportunities to work independently, stretching themselves and others as they talk things through. Such successful lessons also enable pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress because of the effective support of teaching assistants. These lessons move forward rapidly. In less successful lessons, teachers do not drive learning forward quickly enough. Tasks are not well matched to pupils' learning needs, the time allowed for pupils to work independently is too limited and the work of teaching assistants is not focused enough on supporting learning. As a result, the rate of learning slows. In most classes, the marking of pupils' work provides pupils with a clear guide to the next steps in learning.

The curriculum provides pupils with a satisfactory range of learning experiences. It is enhanced by a programme of visitors to the school and visits out of school, including residential experience. While the development of literacy and numeracy skills is given appropriate prominence, there is not enough emphasis on the application of these skills in other subjects. Pupils also benefit from a well-attended range of extra-curricular activities.

The majority of parents and carers say that the school is very caring. This is borne out by inspection findings. Pupils are well looked after in the breakfast and after-school club and most say that the school is a safe and secure place. All adults are particularly sensitive to those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Staff work hard to involve parents and carers in their children's learning. Strenuous efforts are made to promote regular attendance, with additional support provided for those returning after periods of absence.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides effective leadership. In the short time since taking up her post, and with good support from her deputy, she has developed a clear idea of what needs to be done to raise standards and build on the school's existing strengths. The drive for improvement is being strengthened by the wider distribution of responsibility for leadership and management. Middle leaders are responding with enthusiasm and are actively engaged in monitoring provision in their subject areas. However, this monitoring is not yet precise enough to impact on the quality of teaching and learning and so quicken

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pupils' progress. The governing body has a good understanding of the challenges the school faces. While the school benefits from its support, the governing body has been too reliant on reports from the headteacher and not sufficiently involved in gathering first-hand information to challenge for school improvement.

Arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of pupils and for making sure that those working with them are properly vetted are satisfactory. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory, with appropriate measures in place to tackle any form of discrimination. The school's work to promote community cohesion is satisfactory. Although the school has a strong understanding of its immediate community context, not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to gain a meaningful insight into what life is like for others from different religious and cultural backgrounds.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

There was a good response from parents and carers with over half returning the questionnaires. The responses reflect a generally positive relationship with most parents and carers. They say that staff keep their children safe, that their children enjoy school and they are happy with their children's experience at school. A number also rightly comment positively about the support provided for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A number disagree that unacceptable behaviour is tackled effectively. While inspectors observed mostly good behaviour around the school at breaks and lunchtimes, some pupils also expressed the view that the behaviour of a few could be better. While they were unanimous that most instances of inappropriate behaviour are quickly and fairly dealt with, pupils feel that there is inconsistency in the way in which adults respond when any instances occur.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Springfield Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 99 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 180 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	39	46	46	3	3	4	4
The school keeps my child safe	50	51	37	37	3	3	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	29	29	55	56	4	4	5	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	37	47	47	8	8	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	34	34	49	49	5	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	31	55	56	5	5	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	31	56	57	6	6	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	24	24	56	57	4	4	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	29	53	54	6	6	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	22	39	39	19	19	11	11
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	21	51	52	11	11	5	5
The school is led and managed effectively	27	27	50	51	7	7	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	38	44	44	1	1	5	5

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



18 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Springfield Junior School, Swadlincote, Derbyshire, DE11 0BU

Thank you for the help you gave us with the recent inspection of your school and for the friendly way you received us. We spoke to many of you, and you were really helpful. We also want to say how much we enjoyed listening to your singing in assembly.

You receive a satisfactory education. You make satisfactory progress and reach average standards at the end of Year 6. You could reach even higher standards and we have asked your teachers to make sure that, in all of your lessons, you are actively engaged and really stretched so that you make the best progress you possibly can. We have also asked that you are given more opportunities to practise and apply your literacy and numeracy skills in a wider range of subjects.

Most of you enjoy school, listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and are willing to work hard in your lessons. You understand the importance of being healthy. Most of you eat sensibly and take part in physical activities regularly. You learn to work and play well together and to help each other. We have asked the school to provide your parents and carers with more information on what adults do to support those few pupils who find it difficult to behave well. Your teachers spend a lot of time marking your work and through this give you guidance on what you have to do to take the next steps in learning. You can help yourselves to make more progress by making sure that you try hard to follow the advice you are given. Your teachers plan a good range of visits and after-school activities that broaden your experiences. To help you to make even better progress we have asked that they develop activities in ways that link more carefully with your earlier learning experiences. To broaden your experiences even further we have also asked that you are given more opportunities to learn about different cultures and faiths.

Your headteacher, all the other staff and the governing body are determined to make things even better. To help this, we have asked that staff and the governing body are more closely involved in checking the work of the school and how well you are doing. We think that everyone at Springfield can work together to do these things and that you will want to play your part by working hard.

Yours sincerely

Dr Kenneth Thomas

Lead inspector

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