

Springcroft Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 124163 |
| Local Authority | Staffordshire |
| Inspection number | 363975 |
| Inspection dates | 10–11 May 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Sue Hall |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 205 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Stephen Jeffries |
| Headteacher | Bernadette Malvern |
| Date of previous school inspection | 18 June 2008 |
| School address | Grindley Lane Blythe Bridge, Stoke-on-Trent ST11 9JS |
| Telephone number | 01782 394793 |
| Fax number | 01782 394956 |
| Email address | office@springcroft.staffs.sch.uk |

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed seven teachers and sampled 14 lessons. The headteacher joined inspectors for several lesson observations. Meetings were held with the school's leaders, members of the governing body and different groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of policies, planning documents, minutes of governing body meetings and data about pupils' performance. They examined documentation and arrangements associated with how the school keeps pupils safe. Inspectors scrutinised 92 completed questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 100 from pupils and 13 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Do all groups of pupils attain the standards they are capable of especially in writing and do girls and higher-attaining pupils achieve well in all areas?
- Do pupils have positive attitudes to their work and behaviour that support outstanding learning?
- Is curriculum planning effective especially for writing, girls, the more-able pupils and for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?
- Is the monitoring of the work of the school rigorously evaluative and do senior staff address long standing concerns as well as changing priorities?

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school near Stoke-on-Trent. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the percentage from minority ethnic groups are well below the national average. Very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. These additional needs are mainly related to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and speech, language and communication needs. The school holds a Dyslexia Friendly School Award and recognition Healthy Schools 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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils do well in their learning and make outstanding progress in some areas of their personal development. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and of the factors that secure a healthy lifestyle. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community because they have numerous opportunities to take on responsibilities that help them become responsible young citizens. The care, guidance and support of pupils is excellent, a feature noted by several parents and carers, who speak warmly of the school. This is illustrated by one stating that 'Springcroft Primary is a happy and caring school community. My child loves coming to school'. Pupils enjoy their time in school and say they particularly enjoy making friends, and the art and physical education lessons.

Pupils make good overall progress as they move through the school and standards are above average at the end of Year 6. Therefore, they are well prepared for their future. Pupils do particularly well in mathematics where standards are often high. Pupils also read well, although for some time pupils have not done quite as well in writing. Several pupils are quiet in lessons and do not take part in many discussions or develop an extensive or imaginative vocabulary that informs their writing. The school has introduced assessment activities that involve the pupils in identifying what they need to do to improve, but some elements of this work are at a relatively early stage and not making a significant impact on standards.

Teaching, learning and curriculum planning are good. Throughout the school teachers and support staff have strong relationships with pupils and praise their efforts appropriately which builds their self-esteem. Occasionally, particularly at the start of lessons, teachers explain things in too much detail and do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas or practical tasks that maintain their interest. The curriculum is enriched particularly effectively and many pupils enjoy the range of activities.

Leadership and management of the school are effective and self-evaluation procedures accurately identify that this is a good school. The experienced leadership team has created a very supportive environment for adults and pupils with several staff noting 'the staff at Springcroft all work as a team at all times'. There is an appropriate programme of monitoring activities but these rarely involve key subject leaders. They are not rigorously evaluative and do not formally record the exact quality of learning and areas for further improvement. Governance of the school is good. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory, with several pastoral strengths. However, assessment procedures have not been checked rigorously enough to ensure that such information is consistent. With a strong and shared commitment from the whole school community to ensuring that Springcroft maintains its effectiveness, the capacity for further improvement is good.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas, to extend their vocabulary and develop the content of their work
 - extending the staff and pupil involvement in assessment activities in order to identify what aspects of writing can be improved further.
- Improve the monitoring of the work of the school by:
 - ensuring that checks carried out by senior staff and subject leaders are rigorously evaluative and identify areas for further development
 - ensuring assessment information of skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage is accurate and consistent.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are at least in line with the expectations for their age. In Years 1 to 6 pupils of different abilities make good progress including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities such as dyslexia. Attendance levels are high and reflect pupils' enjoyment of school. While in some years girls have not done as well in their work as boys, currently they are making equal progress. The few pupils speaking English as an additional language make similar progress to their classmates. Pupils do particularly well in mathematics and assessment data shows that at the end of Year 6 standards have been higher than in English for several years. Learning is most effective where there is a practical element to tasks and pupils have to find things out for themselves. This was well illustrated in a Year 3 lesson where pupils learned how to estimate and work out the measurements for a suit of armour for Henry VIII's soldiers, using their own measurements. Because the task interested the pupils, they worked with enthusiasm and greater accuracy in measuring the circumference of different parts of their body and comparing this with others. Pupils across the school make good progress in reading and many have good speaking and listening skills.

Pupils' excellent understanding of how to keep safe and of what constitutes unsafe situations includes a detailed awareness of e-safety. Because there is high quality provision for physical education and extensive extra-curricular activities alongside a focus on emotional well-being, most pupils develop a very healthy lifestyle. Behaviour is good and pupils are cooperative and compliant. Many are keen to take on responsibilities and be involved in decisions that impact on their school and the local community. For example, pupils are confident that they have helped reduce poor parking through discussions with their families. They have also reduced litter by discouraging the provision of cakes and sweets to celebrate birthdays and encouraging the purchase of a book for the library instead. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good and many are keen to learn more about other cultures, beliefs and customs.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and never less than satisfactory. Behaviour is managed well ensuring that all pupils, including those with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties, are fully included and involved in activities. In the better lessons resources are used well to promote learning. In Year 2, good use of illustrations and a video interpretation of the 'Great Fire of London' made a positive impact on developing more imaginative writing. Teachers often explain things well, as seen in a Year 6 lesson where the pupils' understanding of ratio and proportions was reviewed. Probing questions and the effective use of the interactive whiteboard helped pupils to recognise the patterns in the ratios and of how to simplify such numbers. However, at times the introductions to lessons are too lengthy and do not actively involve the pupils in their learning, therefore their concentration waivers. While curriculum planning is generally good, some staff miss opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas prior to writing. Assessment routines are good, as demonstrated by the effective deployment of a teaching assistant to make notes of the answers pupils in Year 4 gave in number activities. However, some pupils are not widely involved in assessing their own work or that of others and the marking of work shows some variation.

The care, guidance and support of pupils are long-standing strengths of the school and acknowledged by parents and carers. This is a supportive place for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and effective links with a range of agencies

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strengthen what the school can provide. The parent support worker liaises with staff and other professionals to identify and address the needs of individual pupils and their families. Where appropriate, the special educational needs coordinator ensures that additional support is provided for individuals. The school is particularly successful in the early identification of additional needs, which ensures pupils are not left to flounder. They have targeted support that helps address and often overcome initial difficulties. The work of teaching assistants is particularly effective in providing good quality support. The school takes very effective steps to encourage regular attendance and punctuality. Links to support pupils moving to secondary school are well established.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

There is a positive climate in the school for further improvement. The long-serving senior leadership team members work very closely together and with the staff, several of whom note the supportive nature of the school. Governors are supportive with several visiting the school on a regular basis and with a detailed knowledge of how the school works. School development planning accurately identifies the key areas for improvement but the governing body recognises the plan is not tight enough in identifying how the school will measure the success of initiatives. There is regular monitoring and some evaluation of teaching and learning by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Such activities are conducted in a supportive manner but rarely identify the precise effectiveness of activities or areas for further improvement.

The school's engagement with parents and carers is good, as are the partnerships with other organisations. Work with the local cluster of schools helps develop successful curriculum links. The school promotes equality of opportunity well and diversity is valued although there has been limited recent training on equalities to ensure that staff are continually aware of its importance. Safeguarding procedures are good with very detailed checks on, and records of, those who work with the pupils. These are very well managed by the school business manager's efficient systems. Policies supporting safeguarding are regularly reviewed, although some still contain advice that is no longer appropriate. The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion is good, with very strong links to the local community and developing contacts with wider national and international groups. Outcomes for the pupils are good and the school provides good value for money.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy their time in the Reception class where the staff have strong and supportive relationships with them. Staff offer lots of praise which helps raise the children's confidence. This enables them to settle well and become happy and confident learners. Most enter the Reception class having attended local nursery schools and with a range of skills that overall are at least in line with the expectations for their age. The school has satisfactory procedures to assess the children's skills at an early stage but scrutiny of this information indicates inconsistencies and modest evaluations in some linked areas. Children make satisfactory overall progress and this is often good in their personal, social and emotional development. Children enjoy using the extensive indoor learning areas, which currently include the Vet's Clinic. They like putting on gloves to examine the 'animals' and chatting on the telephone to the 'owners'. However, the introductions to some activities require children to sit and listen for too long without a practical involvement in the task. Staff provide some opportunities for children to make choices in what they do but during the inspection tasks requiring exploration and problem solving were not extensive. Curriculum development is constrained by the very small outdoor play area which the school prioritises as a thoroughfare for vehicles and pupils. Consequently staff have to rearrange the limited range of equipment during the day which supports children's free access to indoor activities and those provided outside. This does not fully aid the development of a range of skills in several different areas of learning.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |

Views of parents and carers

A good proportion of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. Most of the responses were positive and there was unanimous approval of some aspects of the school's work. Several noted with pleasure the caring nature of the school including one stating that 'The school supports the emotional and education needs of the children, staff are approachable, friendly and extremely supportive'. A relatively small number of parents and carers expressed disagreement with aspects of the school's provision. A few do not think the school takes account of their suggestions and do not feel well enough informed about their child's progress. Inspectors note that the school provides regular newsletters, pupil reports and opportunities for parents and carers to discuss progress and raise their concerns. Inspection findings concur with views of a few parents and carers who feel their concerns are not taken sufficient account of.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Springcroft Primary 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 92 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 205 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 59 | 64 | 33 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 73 | 79 | 19 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 46 | 50 | 40 | 43 | 6 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 53 | 58 | 36 | 39 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 62 | 67 | 30 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 48 | 52 | 40 | 43 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 50 | 54 | 41 | 45 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 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) | 52 | 57 | 37 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 48 | 52 | 43 | 47 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 47 | 51 | 41 | 45 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 35 | 38 | 48 | 52 | 7 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 53 | 58 | 39 | 42 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 56 | 61 | 36 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 46 | 48 | 6 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 47 | 40 | 7 |
| Secondary schools | 12 | 39 | 38 | 11 |
| Sixth forms | 13 | 42 | 41 | 3 |
| Special schools | 28 | 49 | 19 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 14 | 45 | 31 | 10 |
| All schools | 10 | 46 | 37 | 7 |

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



12 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Springcroft Primary School Stoke-on-Trent ST11 9JS

Thank you very much for making the inspectors welcome when we visited your school recently. My colleagues and I enjoyed meeting you, especially the groups we talked to who told us about the things you all do. I particularly liked seeing how those of you in Year 5 developed your persuasive arguments of why playtime should not be banned and how Year 3 enjoyed finding out about circumference by measuring parts of their body for a suit of armour. Thank you also for the questionnaires that many of you filled in for the inspection.

We found that your school provides you with a good education. We think the way that staff look after you is excellent and ensures that you feel happy at school. We think you have a very well developed understanding of how to keep safe and the factors that help you lead a healthy lifestyle. We were also pleased to see how keen you are to take on responsibilities and how your efforts are making an impact on parking and litter around school. Your attendance and punctuality are also excellent - well done. The progress you make is good and standards are above average.

The headteacher, governing body (who are the people who check on the work of the school) and staff have agreed to work on some main areas to improve the school. We have asked them to:

- help improve your writing by giving you more opportunities to discuss your ideas and become more involved in assessing your work
- make sure that the checks of what happens in school are more detailed and make clear what needs to be improved.

You can all help by making sure that you always try hard to join in discussions instead of leaving it to someone else to provide ideas.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector

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