

Springfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114174
Local Authority	Darlington
Inspection number	357492
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Barbara Hudson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jim O'Neil
Headteacher	Mrs S Richardson
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2007
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons and observed seven different teachers. They held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, looked at pupils' books and documentation relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress, teachers' assessments and development planning. The responses of 70 parents' and carers' questionnaires and those returned by staff and Key Stage 2 pupils were analysed.

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

- The impact that the recently formed Springfield leadership team is having on pupils' achievements.
- Whether teaching is consistently effective and the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' work.
- The way in which the school ensures that all pupils and staff feel valued as a member of the community.

Information about the school

Springfield is an average sized primary school. Almost all pupils are from a White British heritage. A higher than average number of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school has been successful in achieving many national awards including the Healthy School status, Activemark Gold and International Schools Foundation Award.

Springfield Primary is part of a hard federation formed in 2005 with a special school and a secondary school. The three schools are on one site in one custom-built building, known as the Education Village. There is one principal and one governing body over the three schools and each school has a vice-principal. The vice-principal in each school holds the lead professional role for their school. Two years ago the role of vice-principal for Springfield Primary School was created and the current post holder was appointed. Springfield has recently appointed two assistant headteachers.

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 good school has made significant improvements over the last two years because of the drive of the vice-principal of Springfield and that of the principal of the Education Village and of the governing body. This has resulted in the school having some outstanding features. The vice-principal has successfully improved teaching and assessment which have raised pupils' attainment and accelerated their progress. Much stronger links with parents and carers have been established.

Providing outstanding equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's work. The extremely robust monitoring of pupils' achievement and their participation in all aspects of school life ensures that this is a reality. As a result, all pupils make good progress. More-able pupils' progress is improving more rapidly in writing and mathematics than it is in reading, but the variability is reducing. Overall pupils' attainment is average and achievement is good.

The very keen focus on community cohesion has ensured a harmonious community in which every child is valued. Pupils show outstanding respect and tolerance to others, which contributes significantly to their feeling extremely safe in school. The school, in partnership with the school council, provides pupils with a wide range of outstanding opportunities to contribute to the school village, local, national and international communities. This work contributes significantly to the pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social, and cultural understanding.

The school has correctly focused on raising the quality of teaching, which is now good. Marking is completed regularly and advice provided, although teachers do not always provide time for pupils to respond to comments to improve their work. There is an inconsistent approach to self- and peer-assessment in lessons. The curriculum is imaginative and creates an enthusiasm for learning. Pupils receive very high- quality care, guidance and support because of the very effective systems which oversee their academic and personal development. These support systems ensure that those pupils who need additional academic, emotional and/or pastoral care receive it. This is frequently accessed from the very considerable on-site opportunities. This proactive approach ensures outstanding partnerships with a wide range of agencies to promote pupils' learning and well-being.

The senior leaders have very clear systems for gathering and analysing information so that self-evaluation is accurate and feeds into the raising attainment plan. The progress the school has made over the last two years and the strive for excellence demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve good teaching to outstanding and so raise attainment by:
 - ensuring more-able pupils are consistently provided with sufficiently challenging activities, especially in reading
 - ensuring pupils have opportunities to respond to their teachers' marking and comments to improve their work
 - embed the use of individual and peer assessment into lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils are good ambassadors for their school. They appreciate the excellent opportunities that they have in the Education Village and this was echoed in a pupil's comment 'I enjoy everything about this school. We are so lucky to have such good facilities.' Pupils are polite, are keen to learn and very respectful to each other and adults. These excellent qualities help pupils make good progress and achieve well. Over the last two years, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 has improved from below average to average. Pupils' achievement is good because all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their attainment when they start school that is generally well below what is expected for their age. More-able pupils make good progress overall although their progress with reading is not quite as rapid. These pupils are not always provided with sufficient opportunities to interpret written information, to complete investigations and other challenging tasks.

Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons because the teachers are very helpful and want them to do their best. They feel extremely safe and are very confident that if they share a problem with an adult, that person will help them sort it out or seek help from the extensive range of staff working in the Education Village. They are aware of the benefits of eating sensibly and taking regular exercise. Many take advantage of the numerous after-school clubs that involve physical exercise. Pupils enjoy having responsibilities and know that their opinions and suggestions are valued. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because pupils know right from wrong, are given many opportunities to reflect, share similarities and celebrate differences in a variety of cultures. Attendance is above average and pupils attend punctually. Pupils' secure basic skills and good attitudes to work equip them well for the next steps in life and education.

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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	3
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	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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?

Due to extensive professional development for staff over the last two years, the quality of teaching has moved from satisfactory at the time of the last inspection to good. The strengths in teaching include accurate teacher assessment and the use of this to plan tasks accurately for the different ability groups in each class. They identify the more-able pupils promptly, although tasks are sometimes too prescriptive and lack the opportunity to extend learning. Pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn in a lesson and how to do their tasks because teachers' instructions are clear. Teachers are adept at moving lessons on at a brisk pace because they change activities at appropriate times so that pupils remain motivated. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to provide a good range of learning opportunities for all pupils. Marking includes comments to guide pupils but teachers do not always provide opportunities for pupils to respond to them and so improve their work. The use of self- and peer-assessment is not used in all classes.

The good curriculum is planned effectively to meet individual needs. It links subjects together successfully to increase pupils' motivation and enjoyment. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in art, music, physical education, religious education and French, from teachers employed in the secondary school which is part of the Education Village. The very wide range of additional activities, such as visits, visitors and after-school clubs, provide pupils with many opportunities to practise their skills for working and playing

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together and developing effective teams. Curricular provision for gifted and talented pupils is of high quality and reflects the school's focus on equality for all. Curricular planning, however, does not provide enough opportunities for investigative and problem-solving activities.

Excellent care, guidance and support permeate the whole school, creating a nurturing environment in which pupils are ready and willing to learn. Pupils place a great deal of trust in the staff and know that they will be supported. Parents and carers receive good-quality information and guidance to help them support their child. The school has many strategies to help pupils, including the perceptive deployment of staff and resources to guide pupils who have difficulty learning or attaining at expected levels. The school has a comprehensive range of excellent procedures to ensure pupils attend school and that they are punctual. Parents and carers are very supportive of the time and effort staff put in to ensure that pupils are encouraged to become confident young people.

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?

The vice-principal of the school leads very successfully and motivates the staff to ensure pupils gain the maximum benefit from their schooling. Over the last two years, rigorous checks on the quality of teaching have led to good improvements in classroom practice and in pupils' learning. The effective use of an excellent tracking system for pupils' attainment and progress ensures that interventions to help those who are falling behind have been very successful. It is now focusing more on ensuring that the more able make as much progress as possible in reading. Challenging targets have been set for attainment, progress and attendance which, in the last two years, have been exceeded.

The principal of the Education Village, the vice-principal of the school and the well informed governing body work together very effectively to drive through core beliefs and improvements. They have very successfully implemented the Education Village's principles of inclusion, tolerance and respect resulting in outstanding promotion of equal opportunity, community cohesion and partnerships that promote learning and well-being. The governing body is very proactive, although as yet it does not evaluate performance of different subjects. Members of the governing body are, however, prudent financial managers. The school's partnership with parents and carers is good. The work that the vice-principal has done to improve this relationship has been outstanding. Good safeguarding procedures follow recommended best practice. However, the school does not provide its pupils with sufficient understanding of e-safety. The good outcomes for pupils and the efficient use of resources ensure that there is 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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The newly appointed leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage is having a positive impact on children's learning. Assessments of children's abilities are now accurate and the information is used successfully to develop activities to promote the areas where children were not making enough progress. Children make good progress overall from their starting points that are generally much lower than usually seen for this age. Progress is satisfactory in the lower Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery) but in the upper Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) is very good because teaching is stronger for the older children. By the time children start Year 1, most are working below expected levels for their age particularly in creative development. This is because staff do not always capitalise on children's ideas to extend their play. Staff encourage the children to work independently and in small groups often led by an adult. Staff are good at engaging children in discussions and most ask pertinent questions which move learning on. Staff take careful note of what the children say and do. This helps them plan tasks that are matched to children's needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage staff team work well together and have strong relationships with the children and their parents and carers. Staff are vigilant about ensuring that children's welfare needs are met well.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

'I'm very happy with my child's progress at this school. The school, over the last two years has improved considerably', typifies the sentiments of most parents and carers. Just over a quarter of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire they were asked to complete prior to the inspection. This is a lower-than-average response rate for a primary school. Nearly all of the parents and carers who responded were very supportive of the school's work. All respondents said that teaching was good and the school took account of their suggestions and concerns. In all other areas there were very high positive returns. In a very small minority of cases, concerns were expressed and inspectors were assured that they were known to the school and had been or were in the process of being addressed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Springfield 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 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 260 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	66	21	30	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	63	23	33	3	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	40	57	27	39	2	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	53	29	41	2	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	37	53	33	47	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	51	30	43	4	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	46	33	47	4	6	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)	33	47	28	40	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	59	24	34	4	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	46	32	46	2	3	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	46	34	49	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	37	53	30	43	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	59	27	39	2	3	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.



20 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Springfield Primary School, Darlington, DL1 2AN

I thank you for making the inspectors' visit to your school so enjoyable. You were so polite and respectful and helped us so much that you are true ambassadors for your school. I am sure you will be delighted to know that we judge your school to be a good school. It also has some outstanding features. This means that you are getting a good education and in some aspects it is excellent.

The best things about your school are:

- the way in which it helps you to get along together and ensures everyone is valued and gets the best possible opportunity to succeed
- the way in which you are looked after and supported
- the good progress you are making in your lessons because the teaching and your attitudes to learning are good
- the many opportunities that you have within Springfield School and the Education Village to develop your interests and talents.

In every school there are some areas that could be improved. The most important things that your school can improve are:

- to increase the rate of progress for the more-able pupils in reading
- to further improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding.

All the staff at your school are endeavouring to make your school even better. You can help them by working as hard as you do now and continue to enjoy coming to school every day.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Hudson

Lead inspector

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