

Spellbrook CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117405
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	358133
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Geof Timms

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Natalie Chalcraft
Headteacher	Gillian Vise
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2008
School address	London Road Spellbrook, Bishop's Stortford CM23 4BA
Telephone number	01279 723204
Fax number	01279 726508
Email address	admin@spellbrook.herts.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2011
Inspection number	358133

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

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

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed 10 lessons taught by four teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of policy documents, assessment data, development planning and lesson planning. In addition, 44 questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed.

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

- Inspectors explored the efforts the school has made to improve boys' English and girls' mathematics attainment.
- They looked at the impact of the work done to improve the curriculum and progression of skills.
- They took account of the effectiveness of the school's tracking of pupils' progress and attainment.
- They considered the school's plans for developing subject leadership.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The vast majority of the pupils are from a White British heritage with very few from other backgrounds. Very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average but high in some year groups.

The school's governing body runs a breakfast club every morning. The school has achieved a gold award from the local authority for its travel plan. The headteacher had been in the role in an acting capacity prior to being appointed to the permanent position two months before the inspection.

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. It has been through a period of significant changes in staffing, senior leadership and the curriculum. These changes slowed progress for a period but the current leaders are providing a clear vision for improving standards based on a rigorous and honest self-evaluation. Improvements made since the last inspection, and especially in the last two years, are reflected in the current above-average standards. The speed with which these improvements have been made shows that the school has a good capacity to improve further. The ambition shared by the staff and the governing body is shown by the stated ambition to 'become outstanding'.

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been broadly average over three years. The school has worked hard to improve boys' skills in reading and writing, and girls' mathematical knowledge. Partly because of this, current standards are above average, including those at the end of Year 6. This represents good progress from their starting points in the Nursery, which are broadly in line with those typically found. Progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and provides a secure basis for children's future learning. This good progress is evident for almost all groups of pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. One reason for the improved standards has been the introduction of a new system for tracking pupils' progress. However, teachers are not yet using this to its full extent when planning work to ensure it is sufficiently challenging, especially for the higher attainers.

The school provides pupils with a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy, and they have good opportunities to make a contribution to the school and local community. The school supports good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and parents and carers agree that it is preparing their children well for their future lives after school. Even so, too many parents and carers take their children out of school unnecessarily, resulting in attendance that is barely satisfactory. Pupils behave well in and out of lessons and this has a positive impact on their learning and progress.

Currently, teachers are providing a good quality of education for their pupils. Relationships in classrooms are very positive and teachers make good use of other adults to support learning. New ideas for marking pupils' work and providing them with effective feedback have been introduced. These are positive changes but yet to be fully embedded in day-to-day practice. The work to develop a curriculum in which pupils' skills are built upon progressively has been effective and has had a good impact on learning. The school has maintained its very caring features since the last inspection. Pupils are correctly confident that the adults in the school care for them well.

Subject leadership has been affected by staff changes and the school has recognised that this requires reviewing so that good practice can be spread and the teaching and learning more effectively monitored. The governing body provides good leadership and has

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

continued to offer good support and challenge during the recent staffing changes. The new headteacher has correctly and successfully focused on building a good teaching team and raising standards as her first tasks. The school grounds are an underused resource and do not support learning as well as they could.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards further by:
 - embedding recent changes to the tracking of pupils' progress
 - ensuring this information is used consistently to plan appropriately challenging lessons.
- Reorganise subject leadership to ensure the spread of good practice and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Develop and improve the use of the school's grounds as an effective learning resource.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The evidence of attainment in lessons and pupils' work supports the school's assessment findings and shows that standards are broadly average and improving. Good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage results in pupils starting Year 1 with attainment that exceeds expectations in most areas of learning. This good basis is built on well in lessons in Years 1 to 6. In a lesson in Years 1 and 2, pupils had a good understanding of symmetry and how to organise data in a variety of ways, such as by using Venn diagrams. In Years 3 and 4, pupils showed a good understanding of how Henry VIII formed the Church of England. During the inspection, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were taking part in an enterprise scheme where they devised and developed products to sell. They were able to work out costs and likely profits and were clearly making some outstanding progress in learning about the world of work. They used computers confidently to support their learning. Pupils from minority ethnic groups make equally good progress as their peers. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported and included in lessons. Where interventions are provided these are well tracked and progress checked.

Pupils talk with a good understanding about ways they can keep themselves healthy, especially through exercise, choosing nutritious food and other examples of healthy living. They say they feel safe at school and are confident they have adults they trust to confide in if concerned about anything. Pupils raise a lot of money for charities and the school council has taken part in work with other local schools and is currently looking forward to starting some new environmental developments within the school. Pupils have an important place in the wider community through their enterprise work and they can talk knowledgeably about their learning. The school has strong and positive links with the local church.

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	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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	3
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 current team of teachers is providing a good quality of teaching and learning. There are outstanding aspects in teaching, especially when planned activities are sufficiently challenging, as in the Year 5 and 6 enterprise work. The good relationships between pupils and adults support learning in a number of ways. Pupils have positive attitudes and are willing to answer questions without feeling worried about being wrong. However, there are times when the work is too easy for some of the most able pupils. Teachers are at an early stage in using the recently improved assessment data available to them when planning for individual progress. The deployment of teaching assistants and other adults is very effective. The good curriculum meets pupils' needs well. Staff have maintained a good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities and these boost pupils' interest and involvement. In addition, cross-curricular themes are used well to help pupils understand how skills develop and can be used in different circumstances. For example, in Years 1 and 2, pupils used data-handling skills they had learned about in mathematics in a literacy lesson to sort characters from a traditional tale.

This is a caring school. Pupils are looked after and guided well. Teachers have improved the feedback given to pupils, who now need time found to respond to what they are told are their next steps. The breakfast club provides those who attend with a good, calm start to the day.

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 the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and her senior staff. Subject leadership has been affected by staff changes and the school plans to review this in the near future. Even so, teaching and learning have been well led by the headteacher since her appointment. She has focused on raising standards through improving the quality of teaching and this has had a successful impact. The introduction of regular meetings between senior staff and teachers about pupils' progress has added an effective form of accountability. Monitoring activities have resulted in teachers' skills improving. The governing body has a good system and policy for monitoring visits to the school. Its members have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and are ambitious about its future.

The school is very willing to look outside for expertise and support to help it improve. Because of this, there are some strong partnerships with a range of other institutions and agencies. The engagement with parents and carers has remained strong although a small number have been concerned over the changes to the leadership recently. A very good number of parents and carers help in school on a voluntary basis. The school is effective in supporting children who face some challenging circumstances and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Safeguarding requirements are met. The work to teach pupils about how others live is at an early stage and has not been fully audited, especially regarding national and global aspects. Nevertheless, the school makes sure pupils have ample opportunities to contribute to the school and wider community, for example, through work on the environment and by taking part in local events. Resources are largely used well and the school provides good value for money. Even so, the school grounds are a very underused resource with great potential. The school plans more permanent developments to link to the future planned work on sustainability and environmental education.

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 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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery with broadly typical levels of skill although the small year groups mean this can change year on year. Children in the Nursery and Reception work closely together. However, appropriate work is provided for different ages and abilities. Detailed observations and assessments of children's progress are made. These are well recorded and kept with photographs, samples of work and annotations by the teacher in children's 'learning journey' books. These show the good progress made over the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are also used to provide children with the next steps for their learning. During the inspection, children were very excitedly working at a 'life under the ocean' topic and learning with great enthusiasm about whales, sharks and dolphins. They play well together indoors and outside although the outdoor area is not fully developed or linked to the learning planned for the classroom. Staff are deployed well to ensure children are well supervised and their one-to-one interactions are effective in extending learning. Progress is good in all areas of learning and the staff teach children to stay safe and healthy as good preparation for their future lives.

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	2

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

Stage	
-------	--

--

Views of parents and carers

Analysis of the parental questionnaires shows that the vast majority of parents and carers are happy with the school. As one wrote, 'After 14 years as a parent at the school, I can honestly say it has never been as good as it is now.' All of those who completed questionnaires feel that the school prepares their children well for the next stage in their education. Almost all say their children enjoy school and they are happy with their children's overall experience. They say that their children are kept safe and that they are informed well about their progress. A very small minority feel behaviour issues are not always well dealt with and that the school is not well led and managed. The inspection evidence shows that behaviour is good and any significant incidents are recorded appropriately. Leadership remains good overall even though there have been changes recently to the senior staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Spellbrook 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 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 105 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	82	7	16	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	61	16	36	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	25	57	18	41	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	55	16	36	4	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	55	18	41	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	55	18	41	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	52	19	43	2	5	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)	23	52	21	48	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	61	14	32	2	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	52	15	34	5	11	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	53	16	37	3	7	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	29	67	9	21	3	7	2	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	75	10	23	1	2	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.



29 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Spellbrook Primary School, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 4BA

I am writing to thank you for the warm and friendly way you welcomed the inspectors to your school recently. I also want to thank those of you we met and talked to for the way you told us your feelings about the school. You were very positive about your school and we agree that it is a good and improving school.

Many of you attain above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. You are also getting better at using computers and other technology to help you learn. Your teachers provide you with good learning activities and you help by behaving well in lessons and taking a full part in activities. The school has been through a lot of changes recently but is being well led and managed and it is getting better all the time. We especially enjoyed seeing those of you in Years 5 and 6 working so hard at your enterprise scheme. This learning will really help you at secondary school and I enjoyed tasting your lemonade and cake that I bought!

To make the school even better, we have asked the staff to do three things:

- to use assessment data to plan lessons that are challenging enough for all of you
- to decide on which teachers will lead which subjects so they can carry on the recent improvements made and check on how well you are learning
- to develop the school grounds so they provide an interesting resource for learning.

Thank you again for your help. You can help the school by attending regularly. Enjoy your time at Spellbrook and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.