

Springfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134065
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	381599
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Nichola Perry

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	379
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael MacKrory
Headteacher	Sharon Tyler
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Sixteen teachers were observed in 23 lessons. Two assemblies and break and lunchtimes were also observed. Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, key subject leaders, the special educational needs leader, the inclusion manager, other staff and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at past and present pupils' books, displays, and at documentation, including the school development plan, assessments, data related to pupils' progress, teachers' planning and safeguarding and welfare arrangements. Inspectors scrutinised 171 parents' and carers' questionnaires, 32 staff questionnaires and 100 pupils' questionnaires.

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

- Are all teachers' expectations of what pupils can do in each year group sufficiently high and consistent across the school so that they make better than expected progress leading to higher attainment by the end of Year 6?
- Is assessment across the school sufficiently accurate and understood by all staff, including senior leaders?
- Given the apparent decline in outcomes for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the last two years, what reasons can the school provide to support their current evaluation of outstanding provision and leadership?
- What impact is the curriculum having on improving attainment by the end of Year 6, especially in English and mathematics?

Information about the school

Numbers of pupils at this larger than average primary school are rising. The school comprises 13 classes from Reception to Year 6. Twelve of these are single-age classes and one is a mixed Year 5/6 class. A number of children and their families face potentially challenging circumstances. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is almost double that found nationally. The large majority of pupils are White British. A small number of pupils are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language. The school has been awarded Sportsmark Gold, the full International Award and Wildlife Action Gold. It is in the process of re-applying for the Healthy Schools Award.

A number of key appointments were made in September 2010, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator.

The school provides breakfast and after-school clubs. There is a privately run pre-school provision on the school site but this is inspected separately.

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 Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is improving in some important areas. Following significant changes in the leadership of the school, senior leaders, together with a supportive governing body, are ensuring that the entire school community works as a team, striving to improve all aspects of pupils' academic and personal development.

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils and their families are good. This, along with an effective personal, social and health curriculum, contributes well to pupils' good personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils are proud of their school and say that they look forward to coming to school every day. This is reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils are friendly, work well together and happy to share their ideas and views. They play an active role in the school community and speak confidently about their actions and achievements. As members of the school council or 'buddies' at lunchtimes, they develop good social and moral awareness and values. Adults throughout the school are effective role models in the way that they show respect towards pupils and listen to any concerns they may have. This contributes well to good relationships. Behaviour in and around the school is good and often excellent. Pupils demonstrate good awareness and understanding of the need to keep themselves safe and healthy because these aspects are promoted well throughout the curriculum.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Pupils make satisfactory progress from the time they enter the school to the end of Year 6. Excellent teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage results in children making rapid progress in their basic skills acquisition. The outstanding start children make in the Reception classes is built on successfully, as a result of effective teaching, so that attainment by the end of Year 2 is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Satisfactory teaching in Years 3 to 6 has led to broadly average attainment by the time pupils leave the school, in both English and mathematics. While work done to develop teaching skills and the use of assessment has resulted in improvements there remain some inconsistencies across the school where teaching is less than good. Expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough so that they do not always have access to high-quality learning. Assessment and tracking of all pupils' progress is carried out regularly but this has not always been either understood or used by staff consistently. This means that, too often, teachers have not been clear about pupils' individual needs in order to plan tightly-focused activities which challenge all groups. Although not consistent in all classes, pupils are becoming more aware of how well they are doing and are

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involved more frequently in assessing their own performance. The good curriculum contributes strongly to pupils' good personal development. While it is increasingly having a good impact on their academic progress, there is currently insufficient focus on developing pupils' writing skills or enough planned opportunities for pupils to practise these in all subjects.

Senior leaders and the governing body demonstrate a realistic understanding of the school's performance. Self-evaluation is accurate and this is helping the school to develop well-focused plans for further developing and improving provision and outcomes for all its pupils. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by the end of Year 6 and accelerate pupils' rate of progress by:
 - focusing the curriculum more closely on developing pupils' key academic skills, particularly in writing
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing across all subjects.
- Improve further whole-school assessment procedures so that:
 - senior leaders are better able to set more challenging targets
 - all teachers have a more secure understanding of what assessment information is telling them and how it can be better used to plan activities closely matched to the needs of all pupils, especially those who are more able.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that learning is at least consistently good in all year groups by:
 - making sure that all teachers' expectations are sufficiently high
 - maximising use of the advanced skills of existing staff so as to increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching
 - strengthening and extending the range of methods used to help pupils to understand how well they are learning and what they need to do to improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In recent years, the school has not been building successfully on the consistently good progress made by pupils up to the end of Year 2. Recent improvements in the school's understanding and use of assessment data have mostly eliminated the

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underachievement which has led to the declining trend in attainment by the end of Year 6. Although progress is not yet good overall, it is now more even across the school and there are clear signs that pupils in all year groups are making better progress. The 2011 assessment tests show that, although attainment in English has not yet risen, attainment in mathematics is the highest it has been for several years. School assessment and tracking data show that current pupils in Years 3 to 6 are attaining at higher levels than in the past, indicating that pupils are on track to sustain current levels of attainment by the end of Year 6, thus halting the decline. Attainment by the end of Year 2 remains above average because teaching builds securely on the outstanding start children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Learning outcomes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, are satisfactory. Some individuals and groups, such as those who are at early stage of learning English, attain at a higher level than is found nationally. Individual needs are identified quickly. Effectively managed provision throughout the school ensures that additional support is matched well to pupils' needs.

Learning was good or better in over half the lessons observed during the inspection. Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and enjoyment of lessons, especially where experiences are motivating, challenging and relevant. Pupils particularly enjoy lessons when they can apply their basic skills in practical ways so that they see the relevance of what they have learned. For example, in an outstanding Year 2 lesson pupils were enabled to use their newly acquired knowledge to solve some 'surprise problems'. They could barely contain their excitement and desire to 'get going' on more problem-solving activities.

Pupils demonstrate good knowledge of faiths and cultures different from their own because these are well promoted throughout the curriculum. They uphold values such as kindness and tolerance and are able to reflect on issues facing themselves as well as others. Pupils participate enthusiastically when taking on additional responsibilities around the school. They learn about democratic processes when voting annually for the school's charity for the year. Pupils' well-developed personal skills and their satisfactory attainment mean that they are being satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their learning. They enjoy a good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly the sporting activities, where they learn about and appreciate individual achievement and the value of teamwork.

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

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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The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the majority of lessons, and in particular in the outstanding lessons seen, tasks are well planned and provide good challenge for pupils in all groups. In these lessons, expectations are clear and pupils understand how to assess their progress. Feedback is ongoing and questioning is used well to check pupils' understanding throughout lessons. Consequently, pupils in these lessons learn well, behave well and enjoy their learning. Information from assessment ensures that activities are focused sharply on the needs of all pupils, including those with a statement of special educational needs, and that individual support is provided when required. In other lessons, particularly where teachers do not use assessment to good effect and where they do not model activities regularly, pupils are less sure about how well they are doing and occasionally become inattentive. Marking is regular and positive although comments as to how pupils can improve their work are not consistent across all classes.

The curriculum is broad and it is enriched well, for example, through curriculum weeks or special days such as that on the Egyptians where pupils dressed in national costume and were involved in activities including making beads, paper, olive oil and pottery jars for entrails. The curriculum in Year 1 has been adapted to offer modified learning experiences which relate to those in the Reception classes and this ensures a smooth transition for these pupils. Effective provision for pupils who are at the early stage of learning English and for those who find learning difficult ensures that they make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress from their starting points. The impact of the curriculum is not yet being seen in attainment by the end of Year 6 because, although staff have mapped skills required at each stage, opportunities to build on these year on year have not been systematically planned or applied, particularly those needed to develop pupils' writing.

Staff show a good knowledge of pupils' personal needs but until recently, they have been less knowledgeable about their attainment and progress due to limited understanding of data. The good work done by the special educational needs leader and the inclusion manager ensures that there is very sensitive and skilled support

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provided for pupils who need more focused teaching in order to maximise their potential: several examples were seen during the inspection where additional adult help in the classroom was exemplary. There are good strategies to support children when they join the school and when they leave in Year 6, aided by effective communication with other educational establishments. Parents and carers comment on how well they are supported in helping their children to learn. Pupils say they have confidence to share any problem with staff. Use of buddies in the playground helps to support pupils whose circumstances make them apprehensive. Pupils say they enjoy the breakfast and after-school clubs, evidenced in the good take-up of places.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management at all levels are satisfactory. The newly-established leadership team demonstrates a strong commitment to improve. There is now more rigour in self-evaluation so that priorities reflect better the school’s current performance. This has led to more tightly-focused objectives which have already started to move the school on, although the impact of this has yet to be realised in raised attainment by the end of Year 6. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out so that identified weaknesses in teaching are reducing, and the school has satisfactory procedures to ensure pupils have equal opportunities. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body ensures that account is taken of all aspects of health, safety and well-being. All statutory requirements are met: arrangements for safeguarding, child protection and training of staff are all fully in place. Governors are developing their role in monitoring and evaluating the school’s performance through better understanding of pupils’ progress and attainment data.

Partnerships to support pupils’ learning and well-being are good. Well-established links with agencies which support groups of pupils who may find learning difficult have been further developed. There are strong relationships with other schools which are helping to develop an understanding of best practice that is being shared. Links with the local community are strong, such as those with local churches and other organisations which contribute to learning in the classroom. Pupils in both the pre-school provision and in the local home for the elderly are well integrated into the life of the school. There is good outreach through links with local businesses, although those wider afield are more restricted. A real strength are the international links for which the school is well known and has won an award. All pupils have the

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entitlement to join these links as they move through the school. Good opportunities for developing pupils’ understanding of national issues and the multicultural make-up of the United Kingdom are provided throughout the curriculum.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. The provision is led exceptionally well and staff work consistently hard to evaluate and improve their practice. Children’s welfare is at the heart of all aspects of their learning and is extremely well promoted through the excellent curriculum and highly effective teaching.

Children enter the school with attainment broadly in line with expectations, although a number of skills are higher than those for reading and writing. Excellent teaching ensures that they make significant gains in developing early literacy and numeracy skills. Improved communication with nurseries, together with frequent discussions with parents and carers, makes transition into school trouble free. Parents and carers are very pleased with the provision and their involvement in their children’s learning and development. The curriculum for both indoors and outdoors is extremely well thought-out with themes that integrate and permeate all aspects of learning so that children find learning really interesting from the start. Children greatly enjoy the experiences given to them. Despite restricted accommodation, staff make an outstanding effort to ensure that the learning environment is a vibrant and stimulating place where young children can develop their skills. Provision outdoors is excellent, safe and well-resourced. It provides a wide range of opportunities for physical play and exploration. Inspirational teaching, which makes very effective use of an extremely wide range of resources, is leading to rapid progress for most children at this stage in the year. After only two weeks in school, teaching has

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ensured that many children already understand routines and expectations. Assessment is very strong. At this early stage in the year, some children are already sorted into groups so that they can be moved on quickly, for example, in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their learning of phonics. Children are happy and cooperative. They are quickly learning to listen and concentrate well, how to join in with others and are being encouraged to develop their independence. They have settled rapidly and are clearly enjoying the wide range of exciting activities.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers express a very high level of satisfaction with the school. Of those who returned the questionnaire, there was total unanimity regarding their views about the safety of their children and how much they enjoy school. Almost all feel that the school is well led, that teaching is good and that they are pleased with the experience that their children are having. The overwhelming majority are very positive about all other aspects of the school.

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 171 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 379 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	130	76	40	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	133	78	37	22	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	92	54	65	38	5	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	105	61	57	33	5	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	125	73	44	26	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	98	57	68	40	2	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	102	60	65	38	3	2	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)	100	58	59	35	1	1	2	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	114	67	49	29	3	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	96	56	65	38	2	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	85	50	73	43	3	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	133	78	35	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	131	77	38	22	1	1	1	1

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



3 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Springfield Primary School, Springfield, CM1 6XW

We enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for helping us find out about your school and letting us know what you think of it. We found that you go to a satisfactory school where you are all happy and enjoy going to school every day. There are several good things about your school.

- You are very good at making sure you come to school regularly.
- You have good knowledge about other people's faiths and cultures.
- You know all about how to keep yourselves safe and healthy.
- You try hard and do your best in lessons.
- Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and sometimes very good.
- All the adults at school care for you very well and make sure you are safe.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased with what the school provides for you and get on well with your headteacher and all the teachers.

We have asked your headteacher and the other teachers to do some things to improve your school.

- We would like the school to help you learn even better by making sure that all teaching is the best it can be and you get better results when you are assessed.
- We are asking the school to help you get better at knowing how well you are doing.
- We want teachers to give you more opportunities to practise your writing so that it improves.
- We want the teachers to give you more activities which are much harder and you can help with this by trying your very best in all your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Nichola Perry
Lead inspector

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