

Springfield Community Special School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124515
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380908
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2012
Lead inspector	Sarah Bentley

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jon Harris
Headteacher	Ruth Zimmerman (Executive)
Date of previous school inspection	22 October 2008
School address	Springfield Road Leek ST13 6LQ
Telephone number	01538 383558
Fax number	01538 383558
Email address	headteacher@springfield.staffs.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	10–11 May 2012
Inspection number	380908



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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 information 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'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012



Introduction

Inspection team

Sarah Bentley

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector sampled five and a half hours of teaching in ten lessons taught by four teachers. All these observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher. In addition, a learning walk was completed with the pupils. Pupils' work was examined, pupils were heard reading, and discussions were held with pupils about all aspects of school life. The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, teachers and the members of the governing body. Account was taken of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The inspector looked at a very wide range of documents, including the school's improvement planning and data showing the progress made by pupils. The scrutiny of safeguarding procedures included a close evaluation of pupils' behaviour. The inspector analysed 21 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and considered responses to the questionnaires from 14 pupils and 11 members of staff.

Information about the school

This special school caters for pupils who have a wide range of learning difficulties and a small proportion of those have profound and multiple disabilities. A number of the school's population have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder, significant behavioural, social, and emotional difficulties. Many of the pupils have additional communication difficulties. The majority of the pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. All the pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage and accepts pupils up to the end of Year 6. The school runs an after-school club. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark and has Healthy Schools status. The school and its governing body have been part of a formal hard federation with Horton Lodge Community Special School since April 2012.

The Springfield outreach programme provides expertise and support to mainstream schools, their pupils and families.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Springfield is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because the use of assessment and the teaching of early writing skills need to be improved if learners are to make even more rapid progress.
- Pupils' achievement is good. They make good progress towards their individual education plan targets. The school identifies any gaps in their knowledge and small step targets in English and mathematics are then effectively tailored to meet their needs. Although the school is working well on this, there is still more to do to make sure that this information is always used to move learning on. The use of assessment information is not yet fully embedded in all aspects of the school's work, particularly in writing.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good. Staff have high expectations of all pupils' achievements. The teamwork between staff is excellent and, together, they work effectively to deliver an exciting curriculum, tailored to pupils' needs, which all thoroughly enjoy.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are outstanding. They feel exceptionally safe and confident in school. Attitudes to learning are excellent. The school has extremely robust and well-implemented policies and practices to safeguard pupils' health, safety and welfare and to manage their challenging behaviours.
- Leadership and management are good. The school's performance is managed well and all staff receive good training and support. Self-evaluation is accurate and underpins all aspects of the school's performance, ensuring that areas for further improvement are identified. Learning and progress are tracked and the information gained is used effectively to implement support programmes for pupils. Sometimes, monitoring is not focused sufficiently well on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress or on eradicating inconsistencies in teaching. The school's inclusive ethos provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve both pupils' progress and the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - all teachers making sure that pupils know how well they are progressing and what to do to improve their work
 - ensuring that teachers follow up the targets they set for pupils, to check that improvements are made
 - eradicating any inconsistencies in the teaching of early writing skills.

- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation procedures by:
 - making sure the full range of monitoring activities, including lesson observations, scrutiny of planning, work analysis and pupil conferencing, focuses carefully on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning outcomes and the next steps in their development
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels contribute fully to tackling identified areas of inconsistency and review provision within sharper timescales.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is low, due to their learning difficulties. Examination of pupils' work and the lessons observed confirm that all pupils are making good progress across the school particularly in developing their communication skills. This is because support is closely targeted to their individual learning needs in lessons. The vast majority of pupils are on course at least to achieve the targets expected of them each year and many will exceed these. This is also the case in the Early Years Foundation Stage where there is an appropriate balance of directed learning and free choice which successfully develops children's confidence and positive learning behaviour. All the parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire consider that their children make good progress and would recommend the school to others.

Pupils' acquire basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics because of the consistently good teaching they receive over time. Pupils are very positive about reading, they use some early phonics (letters and the sounds they make) strategies to sound out the words. The books they choose are carefully matched to their ability and this enables them to develop their confidence. Basic skills are taught throughout their topic work, thus enabling pupils to consolidate these important aspects. Pupils enjoy their learning; this is evident in all lessons. For example, a group of pupils worked together enthusiastically learning about the Greeks and took into account what they had found out when creating their own artefacts and images.

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

The school's data show no discernible differences in the progress made by different groups, and all pupils make good progress in their communication and social skills. They achieve well because their progress is monitored closely; any pupils not on track are given timely interventions. Pupils make significant strides in their personal development because the school is successful at identifying their different starting points and giving them the confidence to succeed.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good. Classrooms are secure and exciting places where pupils have every opportunity to learn. The individualised teaching approaches help pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning, including learning to read. Teaching is well planned to make each lesson interesting, practical and matched to each pupil's individual learning needs, and particularly linked to their individual targets. This ensures they are able to make good gains and move forward swiftly in their learning. The relationships that exist between teachers, their assistants and the pupils are highly supportive. Everyone focuses on what they want pupils to achieve in class and this helps them to make good progress.

During the inspection, the teaching seen catered well for the differing and often diverse needs of the pupils. In the lessons where teaching was outstanding, pupils were fully challenged and learning was tailored and adjusted so that all made excellent progress and were given time to respond. The teaching in a drama lesson resulted in pupils working together to produce a class poem where they took turns to contribute their responses, and they were very proud of their achievement as a team. In a physical education lesson, pupils were observed having great fun; their skills were developed through carefully planned physical activities which were well suited to their skill levels.

Teachers are conscientious in providing feedback for pupils but, on a few occasions, they miss opportunities to follow up on the targets they set for pupils or to challenge learners to the fullest extent. Some pupils do not always know precisely what they need to do to improve their work or understand about the progress they are making. This is particularly the case in the development of early writing skills where teachers do not always plan writing opportunities which match closely enough with pupils' individual learning needs.

Teachers and teaching assistants promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well by providing them with good opportunities to share and learn together. Pupils' work is celebrated in a wide range of high-quality displays around the school which value their achievements. On the learning walk during the inspection, pupils thoroughly enjoyed sharing a range of these with the inspector.

All the parents and carers who completed the inspection questionnaire are very happy with the teaching and the way the school supports their children's special educational needs.

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

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Attendance is above average and punctuality is excellent. Pupils respond exceptionally well and develop highly positive attitudes to learning. This is because lessons are exciting and provide an excellent range of opportunities for pupils to improve their social skills. This has been very well established over time and is a key aspect of the school's work. All pupils spoken to say they feel very safe in school and they know how to keep themselves safe from bullies. They know how to keep safe when using the internet and understand the need to be very careful when using electricity. According to the school's records, there have been no incidences of bullying for a considerable period of time.

Pupils respond enthusiastically to the school's reward systems and the celebration assemblies, where they share their work and proudly celebrate each other's successes. Assemblies are used very well to reinforce the school's expectations for behaviour and learning and to prepare pupils for future life in a multicultural society. Parents and carers are unanimous in their view that the school keeps their children safe. All the parents, carers and pupils who returned the questionnaire think that behaviour in the school is excellent.

In all the lessons observed, positive learning habits were displayed. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are carefully tracked over time. When pupils demonstrate challenging behaviour, as a result of their special educational needs, this is managed in a highly inclusive way. Teachers' high expectations ensure that these pupils are reintegrated quickly, ensuring that no learning time is lost.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and the whole school team work effectively together and all leaders demonstrate the aspiration and drive to develop provision further. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection. The governing body is strong and is highly supportive of the school's work. Members check and challenge different aspects of the school's performance and are well aware of its strengths and areas for development. The headteacher provides them with clear information which helps them to fulfil their role and hold the school fully to account. All are focused on pupils achieving their very best. Pupils and their parents and carers are warmly welcomed and valued. Morale in school is good.

The quality of planning and assessment are good examples of where improvements have been seen. Professional development is making a positive contribution to improving teaching and all staff have benefited from the collaborative approach to this within the federation. Leaders monitor teaching regularly and record the impact teaching has on learning. They feed back to teachers accurately and targets are set and reviewed as part of this process. Nevertheless, not all monitoring activities, such as the scrutiny of planning, work analysis and pupil conferencing, are focused sufficiently on the impact of teaching on learning. Review and monitoring activities do not always take place within sharp timescales or involve all leaders in tackling any

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

identified areas of inconsistency.

The curriculum is good overall: it is suitably broad and balanced and well suited to learners' needs. Additional activities are integral to the curriculum. For example, pupils receive the opportunity to go on a residential trip which helps them to develop their independence, life skills and a sense of adventure. The provision develops learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are many opportunities for pupils to experience other cultures and religions. For example, the school has an ongoing link with a school in Kenya and pupils enjoy receiving letters and sending their own. Equality of opportunity is promoted extremely well; the school makes sure all groups have their needs met through careful collaboration with a range of therapists and other agencies. Discrimination is taught about in such a way that it can be understood by pupils. The school's systematic and accurate evaluations and the improvements it has made show it has a good capacity to improve further. Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



14 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Springfield Community Special School, Leek, ST13 6LQ

I would like to thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when I visited your school recently. Thank you for taking me on a 'learning walk' so I could find out all about your school and for showing me your work. Your behaviour is excellent and your school really helps you to learn and do well. You go to a good school where teaching is good. These are some of the best things about it.

- You told me that everyone in school cares a lot about you, and you feel extremely safe and secure.
- You really enjoy coming to school and feel very happy there.
- You get on well with other pupils and show very positive attitudes towards learning in lessons.
- You very much enjoy your topic work and learning to read.
- You go on fantastic trips and do lots of exciting activities in school.
- You look after your school and take great pride in your work on display.

The headteacher and all the staff make sure that you learn about exciting things because they carefully plan your lessons and expect you to behave as well as you can all the time. I was impressed by how you all show that you want to learn. The headteacher agrees that some things can be improved to help you to make even better progress. I have asked your teachers to make sure that they use your individual targets and the work in your assessment files in English and mathematics to show clearly how well you have progressed over time, so that they can share with you how well you are doing and what you need to do next.

You can help by always trying your best and by continuing to work hard in all that you do.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Bentley
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.**