

# Springwood Primary School

Barton Road, Swinton, Manchester, M27 5LP

**Inspection dates** 27–28 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Teaching is not good enough to bring out the best in all pupils and help them make good progress from their varied starting points.
- Some teachers talk too much and do not encourage pupils to do more for themselves; in too many lessons, teachers do not make good enough use of assistants.
- A lot of teachers are paid extra to set an example to other staff yet teaching still requires improvement.
- A very small group of staff are set in their ways and resist change; this, and high staff absence, is getting in the way of faster improvement.
- Although pupils behave well and have good relationships with adults they do not have much to do with each other and this weakens their social development.
- Governors are not acting with enough haste to help resolve staffing issues.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school keeps pupils safe and makes sure they are well looked after and treated with dignity; this makes parents very happy.
- Staff are good at helping pupils who cannot talk make themselves understood, for instance, if they are uncomfortable or worried.
- Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have good ideas about how to make it better. As a result teaching and learning have improved over the past year.
- The school works extremely well with lots of other people, for instance, nurses and therapists, to help make pupils' lives better.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons and saw all classes. One observation was shared with a deputy headteacher.
- Frequent meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteachers.
- Meetings were held with governors, with a representative of the local authority and with four parents. Inspectors also talked to assistant headteachers and a group of teaching assistants who had not been selected by senior leaders. Informal discussions were held with nearly all teachers and a few pupils.
- Eleven responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account by inspectors and also responses to a staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work and information about their past and current progress.
- Documents concerning behaviour, safeguarding, attendance and school improvement were looked at.

## Inspection team

Alastair Younger, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Ellwood

Additional Inspector

Jane Holmes

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Pupils have a wide range of needs. These vary from profound, multiple and complex to moderate learning difficulties. Many pupils have additional complications including medical and physical needs, some of them life limiting. There is a large group of pupils with autism.
- Pupils can join the school at any age but most arrive before they are five.
- About a half of all pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil-premium funding (extra money provided to schools by the government for pupils being looked after and those known to be eligible for free school meals); this is well above average.
- There are nearly three times as many boys as girls; most pupils are of White British heritage.
- A new headteacher and a new deputy headteacher have been appointed since the last inspection.
- The school has 115 staff, most of them being teaching assistants.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning to promote better progress by:
  - making sure that all pupils, especially the relatively higher-attaining ones, are always given work that makes them have to work as hard as other pupils to achieve success
  - making sure that all staff in the classroom understand what is expected of each individual and what their roles are in helping those pupils to achieve success
  - helping teachers to understand when they have said enough and could reasonably expect pupils to get on with a bit more work with a bit less support
  - making sure that pupils are given as many opportunities as possible to work together and help each other achieve success.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - speeding up improvement, for instance, by bringing forward the proposed staffing review to the earliest possible date
  - reducing staff absence by acting more firmly when it becomes persistent
  - ensuring that teachers who are on upper pay spine make a bigger difference in the school through consistently good or better teaching
  - setting individual targets for staff improvement at a much higher level than they are at the moment
  - ensuring that governors step in more quickly, together with leaders and managers, to drive forward improvement in the quality of teaching.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils are only admitted to this school when it becomes obvious that they will never be able to perform at the level pupils in mainstream schools do. When they arrive, some are able to do things more usually seen in infants between birth and three months. There are a few, more-able pupils, but none approach standards typically expected for their age.
- Most parents are happy with the progress their children make. This is mainly because they recognise that the things that are most important to their children involve their well-being and ability to communicate, rather than how well they are learning how to read or do sums. By the time they leave, some of the most-able pupils are reaching standards expected of children aged six. This represents expected progress but is still not quite good enough.
- Communication in any form is promoted well. Pupils are helped to make choices and to express preferences, sometimes verbally but often through the use of signs, symbols and pictures. There has been good recent investment in electronic aids, such as switches and different forms of computers, to help pupils make themselves understood. A lot of the funding for these additional aids comes from fundraising activities, often organised by parents. Their work has been well worthwhile.
- Boys and girls get on equally well, so do pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Pupils supported through the pupil premium do not make quite as much progress as other pupils in terms of numeracy and literacy but for many these are not the most important indicators of progress. In the main these pupils' main barriers to learning, such as physical or communication difficulties, are being well supported through the extra funding.
- Pupils make the best progress in lessons where they are doing things they enjoy and where they are fully involved, such as music and swimming.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is rather ordinary. There is very little that is inadequate but not enough is good or better. Senior staff have noticed that many teachers can teach well but do not do so consistently. Inspection evidence supports the evaluations of teaching made by senior staff.
- Teaching is not without its golden moments. One of these was when pupils were taking very early steps in learning how to read. They were challenged to recognise the different sounds made by a drum and a tambourine being played out of their sight. Only by doing this exercise could the teacher work out which pupils could move onto linking sounds to the symbols that represent them. Pupils loved the exercise, joined in keenly and got very excited when they got things right.
- There are a few staff, including teaching assistants, who are particularly well skilled in helping pupils to communicate, for instance by signing. Teachers use a good range of aids to help pupils understand what is going on in lessons. These include extensive use of picture clues, signs and symbols and the use of familiar objects which pupils know mean certain things, such as 'nearly time for dinner'. Many pupils are helped to understand what time of day it is and what their next activity is by using picture lines which plot the course of each day. This greatly helps to reduce anxiety in these pupils
- There are times when teachers underestimate what pupils can do. For example, occasionally, the more-able pupils do not have to work any harder than anyone else to achieve success. In a science lesson, for instance, not enough was made of the fact that an eight-year-old pupil, assessed as having severe learning difficulties, could describe cuboidal and cylindrical shapes.
- Sometimes, teachers risk interfering with the flow of lessons by leaving it too late to explain what they expect of teaching assistants. In a few lessons, teachers waste time by explaining the purpose of the lesson to assistants when it should be explained in advance.
- A few lessons are characterised by pupils sitting in a semi-circle being talked to by teachers for

far too long whilst teaching assistants join with the pupils in listening passively. Some teachers do not understand when it is the correct time to leave it to the pupils to get on with a bit more independence, by solving simple problems for themselves, or learning how to work with each other to do so.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **require improvement**

- Children are kept safe and are being well looked after and cared for in school. Staff work extremely well with other professionals involved with children and families to put together a comprehensive package of support. Pupils' health and therapy needs are particularly well met, partially because the local authority had the wisdom to locate many of these professionals on the same site when the school was designed.
- Good attention is paid to helping pupils to communicate concerns about their safety or their physical and emotional needs. However, there is no formal system through which they can be encouraged to express their worries to anyone other than members of staff.
- Pupils form very good relationships with adults but quite often ignore each other. In a situation where there are almost as many staff as pupils this is always going to be a danger. The school does not give enough attention to the ways in which it can help pupils to grow up in a child's rather than an adults' world.
- Lessons are very rarely disrupted by bad behaviour. There is a little, spirited, misbehaviour in lessons that is always well managed. The school does not exclude pupils and instances of serious misbehaviour are very rare.
- Nearly all pupils attend whenever they can.

### **The leadership and management**

### **require improvement**

- Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have many good ideas for improvement but sometimes there is not enough urgency in getting them off the ground.
- Most of the school's problems involve staffing issues. Dealing with these issues has tended to distract leaders, managers and governors from the important job of raising standards. A very small minority of staff are not happy, they criticise everything about the school but still say they are proud to work there. Leaders and managers are working well to minimise the impact of this pocket of negativity and morale is improving. Nearly all staff support proposals for change and most parents say they are seeing the school improving.
- Staff absence is too high. On a normal day more than one in 10 staff are absent, most of these are teaching assistants. Two years ago the cost of covering staff absence was astronomical. It has been significantly reduced to about £60,000 this year but continues to be a drain on the school budget. A review of staffing is planned for September 2013.
- The current headteacher inherited a situation where nine teachers had progressed to the highest level of the upper pay spine and two others were at a slightly lower level, yet this is a school that requires improvement. This does not represent good value for money.
- One of the ways through which teachers gain better pay is by meeting targets set for them by senior staff. These targets have not been demanding enough. Targets such as attending a safeguarding meeting, producing a collective worship policy or compiling a list of policies have not secured higher standards for pupils. A review of these targets has recently been completed. They now make much greater reference to the government's expectations for all teachers. The new targets are more challenging and more closely linked to raising standards.
- The local authority was slow to recognise that this was not as good a school as it thought it was. The local authority has reacted well to information provided by the new headteacher and continues to offer a lot of good and valued support to leaders, managers and governors, which is helping the school to improve.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is rapidly improving. There has been a good move towards selecting governors with a good understanding of schools and what pupils can realistically achieve. Governors do not fully understand how difficult it is for leaders and managers to confront under-performing staff and have been slow to step in in order to drive improvement in the quality of teaching. There are some good signs that they are getting to grips with the situation. Some very strong support is coming from representatives of parents on the governing body.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	132153
<b>Local authority</b>	Salford
<b>Inspection number</b>	402543

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	166
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sandra Hayton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lesley Roberts
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 February 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 778 0022
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