

Springfield Primary School

Forsythia Close, Springfield, Chelmsford, CM1 6XW

Inspection dates

7–8 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils achieve well in the happy and caring environment provided by a highly committed staff.
- All groups of pupils achieve equally well, including those who find learning difficult, those supported by additional government funding and the more able.
- Senior leaders have improved the quality of teaching since the school was last inspected. Consequently, standards have risen, particularly in writing, where pupils make outstanding progress.
- Learning activities are well planned to engage pupils' interests effectively. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary.
- Teaching and learning are consistently good. Teachers provide interesting and engaging lessons that motivate and encourage pupils to learn.
- Pupils' behaviour and their knowledge of how to stay safe are outstanding. They greatly enjoy school. Pupils' attendance has steadily improved and is above average.
- The drive and determination of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher have significantly improved the quality of teaching. Their high expectation for raising pupils' achievement is shared by all staff and governors.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Adults do not always ask questions that deepen pupils' understanding enough.
- Pupils do not achieve as well in reading as they do in writing.
- Marking in mathematics does not consistently help pupils to achieve as well as they might.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 23 lessons; one was observed jointly with the headteacher and two with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors observed pupils in lessons, at play, at lunch and as they moved around school.
- Discussions were held with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors held meetings with two groups of pupils, listened to pupils read and checked records of progress in reading.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including records of the monitoring of teaching and of pupils' attainment and progress, the school's view of its performance and the school development plan. In addition, records of meetings of the governing body, safeguarding documentation and reports from the school improvement adviser were reviewed.
- The inspectors took account of the 71 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and 37 responses to the staff questionnaire received during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Watson	Additional Inspector
Ken Parry	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This primary school is larger than average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. This is additional government funding for groups of pupils, including those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, four new teachers have been appointed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of outstanding teaching by making sure that adults always ask questions that deepen pupils' understanding as well as reinforcing knowledge.
- Improve pupils' attainment and progress in reading and mathematics so that they match those in writing by:
 - improving the quality of marking in mathematics so pupils have clear points for improvement and time to correct their work
 - ensuring that all staff are confident in supporting pupils to improve their reading skills
 - involving parents more effectively in order to increase the number who regularly listen to their children read at home.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good and improving because of better teaching. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 rose to above average in 2012, and this improvement was sustained in 2013. Pupils' work in books, work seen in lessons and the school's own detailed assessment information all confirm that pupils make good progress across the school. Current Year 6 pupils are making good progress and are on course to improve on last year's national test results.
- Many children who join the Reception classes start with language and numeracy development below that typical for their age. They make good progress during the Reception Year. Staff are skilled at recognising children's needs and provide a range of activities, both inside and through outside play, which involve and interest children well.
- Teachers challenge pupils well in most lessons. Consequently, the most-able pupils make good progress overall. In 2012, Year 6 results showed an above-average proportion reached Level 6 in mathematics and, in 2013, five pupils gained a Level 6 in writing. Level 6 is the standard normally expected at least three years later.
- Pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium make particularly good progress. As a result, there is no gap in the performance of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals compared to their classmates. This is because the extra money is spent wisely on providing a range of additional support for pupils, such as extra support and small- group teaching, and to give access to extra-curricular activities. This shows the school's determination to give equal opportunities for all pupils to access all it has to offer.
- Early identification of pupils who are at risk of falling behind enables the school to make effective provision for pupils who find learning difficult. Well-planned activities, many of which are skillfully delivered by support staff, enable pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs to make good progress.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a focus on improving pupils' achievement in writing. The proportion of pupils who made more than expected progress in writing was above average, with more pupils reaching the higher levels than in the past. Pupils have many opportunities to write in a range of styles and in different subjects, and they make outstanding progress.
- Pupils' basic skills in mathematics are very secure, and they apply and use these skills effectively. As a result, they make at least good progress in mathematics across the school.
- Many aspects of reading are well promoted across the school and pupils the inspectors spoke to say how much they enjoy books. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 are eager to read and use their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) to help them read unfamiliar words. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics check in 2012 and 2013 was above average. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 are developing in fluency and in their understanding of what they are reading.
- However, progress in reading is not yet quite as rapid as in writing. There are reading support schemes which are showing an impact on improving reading, but not all teaching support staff are fully confident with the reading system in use. Some pupils have limited opportunities to practise their reading skills with an adult at home.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good and some outstanding teaching secures good progress and helps all groups of pupils to learn effectively. Teachers have a clear understanding of individual pupils' prior attainment and progress as a result of accurate assessment information.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, insist on high standards of behaviour and use a wide range of interesting and exciting resources that promote pupils' interest and engagement in lessons. As a result, pupils enjoy lessons, have very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well.
- Teaching in the Reception classes is lively and interesting. Staff work hard to give children wide and varied opportunities to learn. For example, children were thoroughly enjoying learning how to add up using dice as they played the game of snakes and ladders. The activity provided an excellent opportunity to develop speaking and listening skills as well, as giving the children obvious pleasure when they were successful.
- Teachers and support staff have the opportunity to plan work together, and this strong working partnership is evident across the school. This leads to good-quality provision for all pupils and particularly those who are disabled or who have special educational needs. Their additional needs are well supported in classrooms.
- In the best lessons, where pupils progress most rapidly, imaginative tasks are carefully matched to the needs and abilities of all pupils and there is a good pace and challenge to learning. An example of this was observed in a Year 6 science lesson in which pupils were learning how to set up a fair investigation using different methods to test the properties of yeast. Their high levels of concentration, and the level of discussion of their conclusions, clearly demonstrated their enjoyment when learning new skills.
- Pupils' books show a good quantity of work covering all subjects. Teachers' marking has improved, and there is a good balance of praise and suggestions for improvement. This is particularly strong in writing but not as evident in mathematics. Too often, the steps pupils need to take to improve their mathematics are not clear enough and pupils do not always have the opportunity to respond to feedback.
- Teachers' planning and observations of lessons show that most of the work undertaken by pupils successfully matches their abilities and moves their learning forward. However, in some lessons, teachers ask questions that test and reinforce pupils' knowledge rather than deepen their understanding by making them think more deeply. In these lessons, the pace of learning is slower and pupils do not have enough opportunity to reach the highest levels and make the best possible progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Pupils are very thoughtful and polite, and show great courtesy to staff and visitors. They get on very well with each other and have excellent relationships with their teachers. This has a very positive impact on the climate for learning.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They show very high levels of respect for each other, both in lessons and in the playground, where, despite their obvious excitement and enthusiasm,

pupils carefully take turns on the climbing apparatus and share the wide range of equipment that is available to them. They are very keen to do well, and settle quickly and enthusiastically to the work they are set. They respond very well to requests and questions. As a result, they greatly enjoy school and show great pride in it. Attendance is high and persistent absence is very low.

- Pupils say that they are very well cared for and feel completely safe in school. They have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when using the internet. They have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take, but say that it is very rare in school. Pupils say that they would actively try to stop any bullying, and are entirely confident that the school would sort it out quickly if it happened. Pupils value the 'Peer Mediator' system, a position for which they have to apply and receive good training.
- The school's behaviour records show that there are very few instances of poor behaviour, and that these are managed effectively when they do happen. They confirm that the excellent behaviour seen during the inspection is typical.
- The overwhelming majority of parents agree that their children feel safe at school, and responses to the staff questionnaire were unanimous in agreeing strongly that pupils are safe and behave well.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, has brought about significant change at a fast pace. Their unwavering focus on the school's improvement has ensured that both the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils have improved since the previous inspection. Consequently, the school has improved from satisfactory to good.
- The strong commitment to improvement is shared by all staff and governors. All staff play their part in improving teaching, and they work very closely to support each other. Highly effective tracking systems keep a close check on pupils' progress, and pupils are supported to ensure that they all have equal opportunity to succeed.
- All areas for improvement raised in the previous inspection report have been successfully addressed and the school leadership's clear vision has united staff in striving to improve the school even further. This is based upon an accurate and realistic evaluation of what the school already does well and areas in which it needs to improve.
- School leaders ensure that performance targets for staff link directly to pupils' achievement and to targets within the school's development plan. Checks on the performance of staff are undertaken rigorously. Teachers are held accountable for their leadership contributions, their teaching and pupils' progress. The headteacher uses this information with the governors to make decisions on teachers' pay.
- Teaching is monitored across the school and effective action is taken by the headteacher through the management of staff's performance to improve areas of weakness. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection.
- Pupils have a range of rich and varied learning experiences, including learning to speak French and Spanish. Pupils across the school enjoy visits to a wide variety of locations. Residential trips in Years 2 and 6 develop pupils' confidence and teambuilding skills.

- Pupils receive a good range of sporting experiences and they are justifiably proud of their new cricket pitch. Girls' cricket is a developing strength of the school. The school is using the new sports funding to expand the good provision for the development of sport. With the aim of increasing participation, funds are being used to improve facilities and they are also to be used to improve the quality of the teaching of physical education in the school.
- Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the International Week, where they make direct contact with pupils at link schools abroad. These experiences, together with well-managed assemblies, are effective in increasing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum meets the needs of children in the Reception classes well by offering a good balance between activities which are adult-led and others which children choose for themselves. This helps to increase children's independence and social skills, which are successfully built on as pupils move through the school.
- Support from the local authority was recently reduced after a review when the rapid rate of progress made by the school was recognised. Since then a light-touch level of support has been in place.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body bring a good range of experience and skills, which they regularly update through attending further training. Governors are provided with detailed information by the headteacher about all aspects of the school's performance, including pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. They use this information well and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths, as well as high expectations for further improvement. They are proficient at providing challenge, ask searching questions about the progress pupils make and are fully involved in the life of the school. They manage pupil premium funding prudently, and this careful management has enabled the school to give valuable support to eligible pupils and to increase their rate of progress. The governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures and policies fully meet current requirements.

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

Unique reference number	134065
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	425306

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	400
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Mackrory
Headteacher	Sharon Tyler
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2011
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