

Springfield School

Crewe Green Road, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 5HS

Inspection dates 21–22 November 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
| | This inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Quality of teaching | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Leadership and management | | Outstanding | 1 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The school fully meets its vision of, 'Excellence through Effort'. There were no areas for improvement highlighted at their last inspection, but there has been no complacency since then in this aspirational school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make consistently good and better progress, which prepares them well for their move to Year 1. This is sustained as the pupils move through the school leading into the outstanding sixth form.
- Teaching is often outstanding and is never less than good resulting in outstanding achievement. The pupils' needs are met exceptionally well due to rigorous assessment, very clear planning and very confident teaching. The teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to pupils' progress. Expectations are consistently high and a very wide range of strategies and resources are used to fully engage the pupils.
- The pupils' behaviour is a credit to themselves and the school. Their behaviour in class helps to boost progress. The sixth form are exemplary role models for the younger pupils. An ex-student, now employed on an extended work placement at the local university, was glowing in his praise for the school.
- The headteacher has provided inspirational and determined leadership over many years. Senior leaders work exceptionally well as a team ensuring there is continual improvement. Subject leaders are clearly accountable for their areas of responsibility and respond to this challenge particularly well. In the recent Investors in People Gold Review, the school's excellence in leadership was highlighted.
- There is a very rigorous and accurate approach to evaluating the school's strengths and areas for development. This review process provides the basis of very clear and ambitious planning for the future. The desire to provide the very best for the pupils is shared by all staff and they are proud to be part of the school.
- The governing body makes a major contribution to the school and ensures that the pupils have the very best education and care.
- Pupils make great progress in improving their communication skills. However, the school is keen to extend the use of new technology to further develop the pupils' independent communication skills.
- The local authority has total confidence in the capacity of the headteacher, governing body and staff to lead continued excellence. Written comments from parents confirmed their view that this is a, 'fantastic school'.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by 13 different teachers, of which 10 were joint observations with members of the school’s senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, members of the governing body, school staff and a representative from the local authority. Telephone conversations were held with representatives from Reaseheath College and Manchester Metropolitan University.
- Inspectors talked to pupils in lessons about their work, looked at their work, listened to pupils read and met with a group of pupils.
- Inspectors considered a recent school survey of parents’ views and took account of the 22 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey.
- Inspectors took account of 46 questionnaires completed by members of staff.
- Inspectors observed the school’s practice, looked at the school’s checks on how well it is doing, their improvement planning, progress data, teachers’ planning, performance-management documents, safeguarding policies and records, behaviour and attendance documents.

Inspection team

David Smith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Holmes

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils whose learning difficulties range from severe to profound and multiple. A small but increasing minority have autistic spectrum conditions. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Seven are dual registered with local mainstream schools.
- Most of the pupils are White British. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. Two thirds of the pupils are boys.
- Close to the national proportion of pupils in the school are entitled to receive the pupil premium grant. This funding provides additional support for those in the care of the local authority, those with families in the services and pupils known to be entitled to free school meals.
- Sixth-form students have the opportunity to attend courses at Reaseheath College and the Bridging the Gap course, in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University. There are links with local employers to provide community-based learning activities for the older pupils and sixth form students.
- The school has many links with other schools in the local authority. This includes the provision of an early years outreach support service.
- The school has a wide range of national awards including Investors in People Gold and the Inclusion Quality Mark.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further extend the use of new technology to enhance the pupils' confidence and further develop their independent communication skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils make outstanding gains from their very low individual starting points at the school compared with those typically expected for their age. Based on national criteria, they do better than most pupils with similar needs in other schools.
- Children make consistently good and better progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because learning is skilfully matched to their needs. The quality and rigour of assessment is a strength of the school and ensures that all pupils are fully challenged. The great majority meet and many exceed challenging targets.
- There is no difference in the progress of different groups, including boys and girls, at the school. The most-able pupils and those who are entitled to receive the pupil premium are making rapid and sustained progress. The purchase of *ipads* has had a very positive impact and teachers are keen to further extend the use of new technology to enhance the pupils' independent communication.
- Teaching provides significant challenge for the higher-achieving pupils and outstanding progress is evident in their written work. They become more confident and read with increasing speed, accuracy and understanding.
- Rapid progress is made in the key skills of literacy, communication and numeracy, which are very effectively reinforced in all lessons. Consequently, pupils make outstanding progress, linked to their abilities, in reading, writing, speaking and listening and communication. The progress of the younger pupils is being very effectively developed in their daily phonics sessions. In an outstanding lesson, Year 1 pupils could demonstrate their learning on the computer to each other. Pupils make outstanding progress in mathematics because their learning is practical and stimulating.
- Accreditation in the sixth form builds on exam success in Years 10 and 11. By the time the students leave school they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of education, training or employment. Entry level and BTEC courses at levels one and two are used very effectively to engage the students. Students make excellent progress in their work and college placements as they become very confident in the community. Also, the Chat and Chill school-based café provides valuable opportunities for the students to develop their skills by catering for customers from the locality.
- There is a comprehensive range of on-site support services which makes it possible for the pupils to have their emotional and medical needs met, with the least possible disruption to their learning. This excellent team makes a major contribution to the pupils' outstanding progress.
- Pupils are proud of their achievements, for example, in sports and art, and enjoy attending well-organised after-school clubs, residential trips and day visits.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is at least good and much is outstanding across all year groups. Consequently, the pupils make rapid and sustained progress.
- Teaching is confident, matched by great expertise and consistently high expectations. Teachers plan very precisely to meet the pupils' wide range of complex needs. Teaching assistants provide an excellent balance of support and challenge to help promote outstanding progress. Excellent relationships encourage pupils to participate in their learning, become more curious and develop as creative learners. A wide range of strategies and resources are used to enable the pupils to communicate and access their learning. This includes signing and visual prompts to help the pupils, for example, make choices.
- In a lesson for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage the skilled choice of media and song supported engagement and promoted good progress in counting on and counting back. The teaching assistants took every opportunity to reinforce learning, which helped to consolidate

progress.

- In an outstanding lesson for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties in the sixth form, students thoroughly enjoyed their engagement and participation in the music activities. The music specialist and the excellent staff team ensured that not a second was wasted, as the students worked hard to create the music. Students with a particular talent in music have access to a wide range of instruments to extend their skills. In another lesson, students of similar abilities were enthralled by the enthusiasm and skills of the teacher. She used an extensive range of resources to captivate their interest in a story about a magic carpet ride to India. The students' responses highlighted their total engagement and enjoyment from the experiences provided.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and accurately using a wide range of procedures. This shapes future support and interventions to ensure that the pupils make rapid progress. A brisk pace to learning promotes an excellent work ethic. Photographs and other evidence of the pupils' work shows that this approach to work is typical. Higher-achieving pupils extend the quality and quantity of their writing and this makes a major contribution to their success in external accreditation. Members of staff ensure that the pupils are aware of how to improve their work by very skilled and frequent assessment.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding in all aspects of the school, which helps to develop their self-esteem and confidence. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to be involved in an extensive range of artistic, musical and cultural activities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Outstanding behaviour is evident in all aspects of school life and, as a result, there have been no exclusions for many years. The pupils are fully engaged in learning and this has an excellent impact on their progress. They work very well in groups and become increasingly independent learners.
- The highest standards of behaviour are evident in the playground and in the dining room. Lunch is an excellent opportunity for social development and many pupils become far more confident in groups. School assemblies make a major contribution to life in this cohesive community. Pupils' views are listened to, are respected and make a real difference. A group of pupils attended the Commissioner's Day at the local university and the organiser was amazed at how well they expressed their views alongside their mainstream peers.
- Students in the sixth form behave exceptionally well and are excellent role models for the rest of the school. A tutor reported that the sixth-form students make the very best use of all of their time at Reaseheath College in their equine and farming studies. The students feel safe when they are attending alternative and work placements. They also have a wide range of responsibilities in school, including helping younger pupils in class and assisting wheelchair users. The students perform both of these duties sensibly and take great care of their peers. The school is an attractive and stimulating learning environment and there is an exceptionally positive climate for learning at all times. Bullying of any kind is not part of the school's culture and pupils say that they feel very safe. Pupils are kept safe when using the internet. A recent safety and risk assessment review concluded that there are no areas for improvement in these aspects of the school's provision.
- The promotion of pupils' attendance is managed particularly well and, as a result, the pupils attend school whenever they can. They thoroughly enjoy their time in school and quickly settle to their work at the start of the school day. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about both behaviour and safety at the school.
- Pupils who require high levels of support when they first arrive at the school learn to manage more independently. This is because their needs are met exceptionally well by well-trained, consistent and committed staff.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leaders at all levels are very focussed in driving forward improvements and sustaining excellence in all aspects of the school. This is an inclusive and cohesive school where all members of staff go the extra mile in the best interests and well-being of all of the pupils.
- There is a very challenging and honest approach to the ongoing evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development. The middle leaders make a significant contribution to school improvement in combination with the great expertise provided by the senior leaders.
- Performance management is rigorous with a clear link between pay and performance. There are very clear and well-established systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning. Senior leaders have acted promptly when aspects have required improvement and, as a result, all of the teaching and learning is good or better. Staff are very positive about the opportunities provided to develop their skills by their involvement in excellent professional development.
- The curriculum is appropriate, relevant and challenging with a strong focus on English and mathematics. Learning is so carefully and expertly tailored to meet the pupils' needs. They respond exceptionally well to their enriched and extended curriculum. The primary funding for sport is used to promote growth in the range of after-school sporting activities, residential trips and partnership work on physical education with other schools.
- Sixth-form students had the opportunity to experience life in a different culture during their recent visit to Barcelona. They also enjoy taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Awards, which make a major contribution to their personal and social education. The pre-vocational work-based training programme at the local university is an excellent initiative.
- The local authority has a light touch approach to this outstanding school, which takes a lead role in many local initiatives.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides an excellent blend of support and challenge to leadership in the school. They know the school extremely well, which helps to inform their contribution to school improvement. Governors hold senior leaders to account for pupils' achievement. They have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and ensure that there is a robust link between performance and progression along the pay scale. They contribute to the planning of how additional funding, including the pupil premium grant, is spent and check on the impact of the funding. Current funding is being used to provide additional support and purchase resources, including *ipads*, to ensure that these pupils make the best possible progress. The governing body have played a significant role in driving forward the plan to build excellent additional sporting facilities in the near future. Governors ensure that the school and all off-site provision meet safeguarding requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 111507 |
| Local authority | Cheshire East |
| Inspection number | 426208 |

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

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| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Community special |
| Age range of pupils | 2–19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 118 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 23 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | David Griffith |
| Headteacher | Mark Swaine |
| Date of previous school inspection | 20 October 2008 |
| Telephone number | 01270 685446 |
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