

Springfield Primary School

Dudley Road, Rowley Regis, B65 8JY

Inspection dates 13–14 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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

- Pupils' progress varies too much between age groups to support good achievement. It is slowest in the Early Years Foundation Stage and fastest in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is held back by their limited understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters make).
- Teachers do not always use checks on pupils' understanding or the levels they are working at effectively to set work at the right level of difficulty, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and for pupils who have special educational needs.
- Work is too easy at times, particularly in mathematics.
- Teachers' marking does not always show pupils clearly how to improve their work.
- Leaders are addressing the right areas to improve the school, but have not tackled them rapidly enough or monitored them rigorously to ensure their actions are effective.
- Staffing difficulties have meant that leaders have not kept an effective check on how well teaching is helping pupils to learn and make progress.
- Governors are still developing their skills in monitoring the school's work, and are not yet holding leaders effectively to account for its performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Most pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress, and leave the school well prepared for their next stage of education.
- Extra funding is used well to support the progress of those eligible for the pupil premium. Their achievement is good, especially in English.
- Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes, and improving attendance, make a positive contribution to their achievement.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are good because of the quality of care and support given by all staff and governors.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons or parts of lessons and an assembly. They also listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with pupils, parents, governors, school leaders and a representative of the local authority.
- A range of documents were considered. These included the school’s analysis of how well it is doing, the school improvement plan, school policies (including those relating to staff performance), minutes of governors’ meetings, local authority reports, safeguarding records, behaviour and attendance records, and the results of the school’s parental survey. There were not enough responses on the Ofsted Parent View survey site to record results.
- Inspectors examined work in pupils’ books and around the school.

Inspection team

Lynne Bradbury, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sajid Gulzar

Additional Inspector

Hilary Green

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Springfield Primary School is larger than the average primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school has been without sustained or continuous leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage and phonics over the last three years due to illness.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority or from service families) is higher than average.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those whose first language is not English are below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for attainment and progress at the end of Key Stage 2.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by making sure that:
 - all teachers use assessment information effectively to help them plan new learning, particularly for younger children and those who have special educational needs
 - all teachers provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work
 - the teaching of phonics takes full account of the levels pupils have already reached and what they need to learn next
 - work in mathematics is challenging for all age groups, especially for more-able pupils.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on teaching and learning, particularly for the younger pupils, by:
 - making identified improvements more quickly
 - providing training to make sure phonics is taught well by all staff
 - rigorously monitoring the impact of teaching on pupils' progress
 - using marking procedures consistently in all year groups so that pupils know how to improve their work
 - developing the role of governors in monitoring performance, asking leaders challenging questions and ensure that priorities for improvement are tackled quickly
 - ensuring that safeguarding records are kept up to date.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- A large proportion of children enter the nursery with skills and abilities which are below those typical for their age. Their progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement and not enough children move into Year 1 with the skills typically expected of this age group.
- In Key Stage 1 pupils' progress in reading is hampered by low attainment in phonics, because teachers do not check effectively what pupils already know in order to set new challenges. In 2013, the percentage of pupils who attained expected levels in the Year 1 phonics test was well below average.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils usually achieve standards that are in line with national averages in writing, indicating good progress. Results in mathematics improved in 2013 and were also in line with national averages. While pupils in Year 2 make up, to some extent, for lost ground in their knowledge of phonics, their attainment in reading is not as strong as it should be.
- In 2013, results of Key Stage 2 tests and assessments were broadly in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' performance, including the progress they had made during Key Stage 2, was better in writing and mathematics than in reading. In addition, their performance in the spelling, punctuation and grammar test at the end of Key Stage 2 was about a term behind that of pupils nationally.
- More-able pupils in Key Stage 2 reached standards that were broadly average, compared to similar pupils nationally, in reading and above average in writing, but below average in mathematics in 2013. Across the school age range, workbooks indicate that pupils are not challenged enough in mathematics and, hence, should be achieving better. This is particularly so for more-able pupils.
- Pupils' work in lessons and books indicates that progress in Key Stage 2 is good in reading and writing, especially in Years 5 and 6. The school has improved the standards of grammar, punctuation and spelling across Key Stage 2.
- The pupil premium funding is used to provide extra small group support and one-to-one tuition. Eligible pupils are currently making good progress and reaching standards in line with their classmates by Year 6. In 2013 they were about half a term ahead of their classmates in reading, one term ahead in writing but just over a term behind in mathematics.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013, pupils who have special educational needs had made good progress and reached levels higher than similar pupils nationally. The progress of these pupils currently in school is less well developed and they are not moving forward in their learning fast enough. While good quality support promotes their learning in lessons, inconsistent use of assessment information means they are not given work at the right level.
- The new primary school sports funding is enabling pupils to extend their healthy lifestyles and experience a broader range of physical activities within and outside school.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Much of the teaching seen during the inspection was good, but it has varied over time and is not having enough impact on learning because of weaknesses in the use of assessment information.

In particular, work is not set at the right level of difficulty for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, for pupils who have special educational needs or in phonics. Only a small amount of teaching is outstanding.

- Some teaching is also less effective in mathematics, and pupils' learning is limited because they spend too long doing work that they are already able to do. Too little account is taken of the learning needs of different ability groups, especially more-able pupils. This is reflected in undemanding work in pupils' books.
- Staff skills in teaching phonics in Key Stage 1 are not developing sufficiently quickly and this is holding back pupils' progress in reading.
- Marking and feedback to pupils are not consistently effective across the school, and this means that some pupils do not know how to improve their work.
- Pupils in all age groups have learning targets, but not all teachers take account of these, or feed back to pupils on how well they are doing against these targets. Hence, pupils do not know how well they are progressing.
- Those who have attended the Outstanding Teaching Programme are using their training to coach and develop other teachers. This is having some positive effects.
- Where teaching is good or better, teachers take account of pupils' past achievement and provide a range of work that challenges pupils of different abilities. They also take good account of ongoing progress made by each ability group during the lesson and adapt the work effectively depending on how well pupils are able to get on with it. In these lessons, pupils have clear focuses for learning, such as criteria which describe what success will look like, and the opportunity to assess their own work alongside class partners.
- In a well-taught guided reading lesson, for example, all pupils were engaged in appropriately challenging work analysing text while the teacher worked with a particular group. Excellent questioning made sure that every pupil had to think hard and deeply to answer the questions well. The teacher skilfully adapted her questions in the light of pupils' responses.
- Where learning was good or better, pupils were able to make good progress whether working on their own, in teams or groups.
- Teachers display good subject knowledge, manage resources well and ensure that lessons start promptly with little time wasted. Teaching assistants are well trained and make a good contribution to pupils' progress.
- All staff manage behaviour well and build good relationships with their classes. Pupils appreciate the praise and encouragement which make them feel valued and important, and are keen to share their ideas without fear of failure.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good, and sometimes outstanding. During the inspection, in lessons and around the school, pupils demonstrated high levels of cooperation when working in groups, but were also able to challenge each other's thinking, and to work with confidence on their own when necessary. Pupils readily ask questions and have the skills to think for themselves. They

show keenness to learn and want to do their best.

- Pupils' attitudes are very positive. They express great pride in their school and great confidence in the care and support of the staff. Pupils wear their uniform with pride and talk excitedly about the range of opportunities and out-of-school clubs available.
- Relationships at all levels are good, and pupils show good manners and respect for visitors and all members of the school community. This is because staff set high expectations for themselves and their pupils, and are consistent in how they manage behaviour, while being warm and caring.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good. Pupils, parents and staff generally agree that behaviour is good and that pupils are safe and happy in school. They understand the various forms of bullying (including those concerned with new technologies) and say that these are rare, but they know how to stay safe and to get help if they need it.
- Records of incidents and action taken show that any problems are dealt with effectively and lead to improvement. Pupils are keen to support those who have particular needs.
- Attendance is broadly average, and is continuing to improve because of the measures taken to promote good attendance, including the rewards offered to pupils who attend regularly. Exclusions are rare.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leaders and governors demonstrate great commitment to a vision of excellence for the school and to achieving the best for every pupil. Their accurate analysis of performance data has enabled leaders to identify the right priorities for development. However, these are not being tackled quickly enough.
- Following significant staffing issues over the last three years, teaching and achievement are not being raised effectively for all pupils, because leaders are not checking that assessment information is being used effectively to build on pupils' learning in all age groups and subjects. Nor are they ensuring that staff capitalise on the good attitudes of pupils in order to challenge them to reach higher standards, especially in mathematics.
- Leaders are not monitoring teaching and learning rigorously enough. In particular, they are not checking the impact that teaching is having on learning by also looking at pupils' books and the progress being made in each class. This means that their evaluation of teachers' performance is not based on the full range of available evidence. As a result, teachers and subject leaders do not receive precise enough feedback, or the right support, to make the rapid improvements needed to tackle inconsistencies in teaching and learning.
- Leaders have developed effective policies for marking and feedback, but have not made sure that these are implemented across the whole school.
- The school makes the appropriate checks on all adults to ensure that they are safe to work with children. However, the records of these checks are not kept up to date. This has not been given a sufficiently high priority.

- Training is being used well to improve the work of the best teachers, and they are coaching other members of staff whose teaching is good and has the potential to be outstanding.

- Leaders have secured some improvements in progress and standards of work. For example, pupils are making much better progress across Key Stage 2 now than two years ago. This, together with improvements to some aspects of teaching, indicates that the school has the capacity to be better.

- The school provides a rich range of learning opportunities and subjects. Mathematics, reading and writing skills are further developed through these experiences. Pupils enjoy this variety and the wide range of out-of-school activities. For example, the Dynamite Dance Club has given pupils the opportunity to present their work at the O2 Arena and this has become very popular with them.

- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors show high levels of commitment and support for the school. Records of meetings and visits to lessons demonstrate their desire for every pupil to have the best opportunities.
 - The governing body is aiming for the Governors Quality Mark to further develop its work, and has recruited members with a wide range of skills. Governors undertake appropriate training in finance and safeguarding, but have not been rigorous in checking that records are up to date.
 - Governors understand the school’s priorities for improvement and check its work using published data such as the results of tests and assessments at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. They have not, however, linked their judgements or staff pay decisions to pupils’ progress. Nor have they challenged school leaders to secure key improvements more rapidly.
 - Governors’ use of the pupil premium funding has been effective in raising the achievement of eligible pupils, and they check this regularly. They have allocated the extra funding for sport to support teachers’ skills in extending health and well-being for pupils.

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	132140
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	440637

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Williams
Headteacher	Susan Powis
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2010
Telephone number	0121 559 1333
Fax number	0121 569 3285
Email address	headteacher@springfield.sandwell.sch.uk

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