

Springfield Junior School

Springfield Road, Swadlincote, DE11 0BU

Inspection dates 30 April – 1 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils in Years 5 and 6, who experienced poor teaching and staff turbulence in the past, have not made enough progress since joining the school. Although they are now catching up, they are still some way behind most pupils of their age.
- Not all teachers have sufficient subject knowledge in mathematics.
- Teaching in some classes and in non-core subjects such as religious education, French and music is not consistently good.
- Not all teachers are fully confident at using the school's agreed approaches to organising teaching, marking and assessment.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and other leaders in the school have taken firm and appropriate actions to bring about improvements.
- Most pupils, apart from those in Year 5, are now making good or outstanding progress and are beginning to make up lost ground.
- The quality of the teaching in English and mathematics is now good in nearly all classes.
- Teaching assistants are used highly effectively to support pupils' learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils have received well-targeted extra support and are catching up with their peers.
- Pupils with autism, taught partly or fully in the school's resourced provision (the Balloon Room) are very well looked after. They make good progress from their starting points.
- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school site is mostly excellent. Some pupils do have very challenging behaviour (sometimes linked to a disability), but pupils are clear that the school is managing their behaviour well and that they are improving.
- The school environment is well cared for, attractive and stimulating. Pupils are very proud of their school and their achievements.
- Leaders all levels in the school now have a much clearer understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Improvement planning to bring the school out of special measures has been effective.
- The school staff now function much more effectively as a team. There is a strong commitment to further improvement.
- The governing body is ambitious and enthusiastic to sustain the school's progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons taught by nine teachers, and made brief visits to view the learning in another nine lessons or activities.
- Pupils' books and other work were scrutinised to gain a picture of their progress and the quality of teaching over time.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in all year groups, both formally and informally.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the leaders of literacy, numeracy, creative curriculum and the special educational needs coordinator. An inspector also met with five members of the governing body, two representatives from the local authority and spoke on the telephone with the National Leader of Governance and the Local Leader of Education who have been supporting the school.
- The school's policies, records of pupils' progress and details of the performance management of the teaching staff were scrutinised.
- The views of parents were considered, including the 12 parents who have responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View), those who replied to a recent governing body survey and a number of parents spoken to during previous inspection visits.
- Inspection activity conducted as part of the special measures monitoring of the school over the last two years was also taken into account.

Inspection team

John Peckham, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Anne McAvan

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- Springfield Junior School is smaller than most primary schools.
- Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The school has a much higher proportion of boys than most schools.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for additional funding (the pupil premium) because they are in local authority care or known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is much higher than the national average. This is also true for pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school has specially resourced provision, the 'Balloon Room', for 16 pupils with special educational needs. Most of these pupils have autistic spectrum disorder. All of them have statements of special educational needs and receive support in mainstream classes.
- In 2013, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- New leaders for numeracy, literacy and the creative curriculum all took up their roles within the last year.

The school was placed into special measures following the inspection November 2012. Since then, it has been regularly monitored by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and received additional support from Derbyshire County Council, a Local Leader of Education and a National Leader of Governance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take action to ensure that all teaching is consistently good by:
 - prioritising the teaching of the present Year 5
 - checking more closely on the quality of non-core subjects and lessons currently delivered by supply and part-time teachers
 - ensuring that all teachers' plan, prepare, manage behaviour, organise learning and mark pupils' work as well as the best teachers
 - ensuring that all teachers have good subject knowledge, especially in mathematics.
- Continue to raise the achievement of pupils so that they reach standards that are in line with national averages through improvements to the quality of teaching.
- Re-shape the school's self-evaluation and development planning, from that dictated by the urgent need to bring the school out of special measures, into a useful tool that will drive the medium and long-term development of the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils join the school in Year 3 with average attainment that is around or slightly below that found in the majority of schools.
- Currently, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are making good progress from these starting points, particularly in reading. Although not all groups are doing as well in mathematics in these year groups, the overall progress is still good.
- Years 5 and 6, however, have suffered with disruptions to teaching over the last two years and many pupils have fallen a long way behind or missed out on key elements of understanding. Although they have made good and outstanding progress since September, pupils' results for Year 6 tests in 2014 are unlikely to show much improvement on last year.
- Teachers and leaders have focused on improving the learning for Year 6 pupils this year, and some have made exceptional progress, especially in writing and mathematics. In Year 5, however, the rates of progress have been less strong, with the weakest progress in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding have made good progress in Year 6, but still lag nearly a year behind other pupils in the school. In Year 5, however, pupils supported by the pupil premium make strong progress and there is no gap. Overall, the progress of boys is less strong than that of girls.
- Most pupils with special educational needs are making good progress from their starting points. This is supported by well trained and effectively deployed teaching assistants.
- The most-able pupils are now making very good progress and catching up quickly on lost ground. Teachers regularly provide work that is challenging and extends thinking.
- The care that pupils take over the presentation of their work has improved substantially. Most pupils are proud of their work and were pleased to share achievements with inspectors. A genuine love of learning and ambition to achieve well is developing across the school.
- Most pupils are keen readers. The library is welcoming and comfortable and pupils enjoy exploring new books and talking about what they have read. Work to ensure that pupils who join the school with weak reading skills improve and catch up is effective.
- The school has used extra government funding provided to promote sport, to increase the range of activities available to pupils. Dance and golf are among activities now available and good use is made of the school's swimming pool.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although most pupils now experience typically good teaching, especially in English and mathematics, this is relatively recent. Over a longer period, teaching is weaker; there is not yet enough consistent evidence of good outcomes for pupils. The quality of teaching in one or two classes sometimes requires improvement. Subjects such as religious education, music and

French are sometimes delivered by part time and temporary teachers, who are not as good as the regular class teachers.

- The introduction of whole-school approaches to planning, marking and the deployment of teaching assistants have all brought about improvements. In nearly all the classes observed, work was set to suit pupils of different abilities. There are, however, gaps where teachers are not yet fully confident. For example, only some of the teachers insist that pupils learn properly from the thorough marking. Where this does take place, the pupils say that they appreciate knowing exactly what to do to improve and having time and encouragement to do it. In some classes observed, teachers allowed pupils to waste time on unnecessary tasks such as cutting and sticking, instead of focusing on completing more challenging work.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and, because of effective planning with teachers, they make a very strong contribution to learning. In more than one lesson observed, the teacher and teaching assistant completed a well-planned set of separate activities that came together after a short time to ensure that learning continued at a fast pace. Teachers group flexibly and use a range of teaching strategies to adapt the learning for pupils in the light of their progress.
- The ways in which teachers check on the learning and progress of pupils have improved substantially in both frequency and accuracy. Pupils and parents are also provided with much better information about progress and the next steps in learning than was the case. Homework is set and marked regularly.
- In most classes, expectations are now much higher. Teachers set high standards for work and presentation, and these are rigorously enforced. In one or two classes, however, there was evidence in books that the pace of work and the expectations for presentation had been allowed to slip for a period before being brought back up to standard.
- Teachers are very complimentary about the quality of training, support and guidance that they have received from senior leaders. Subject leaders are beginning to make an impact on the quality of teaching in their subjects. Opportunities for teachers to learn from each other have been effective and appreciated this year.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school has consistent policies to promote good behaviour; these are clearly understood and lead to good conduct both in and out of lessons. Pupils value the system of rewards and understand the way in which sanctions are applied.
- The proportion of pupils excluded from school for a short time because of their behaviour has dropped significantly.
- There are special quiet areas available at lunchtime for those who need a calmer space. Adults lead and support constructive play in the playground and a large stock of play equipment has been purchased and is regularly loaned out. An enthusiastic group of pupils in the gardening club are growing flowers and vegetables in the school garden.
- A number of older pupils have taken on leadership roles as prefects and monitors of equipment and activities during lunch and break times. They perform these roles well and make a valued contribution to the school.
- There is a positive attitude around the school and staff are good role models in behaviour and

politeness. Pupils are very complimentary about the abilities of the inclusion mentor to deal effectively with behaviour issues such as bullying, but feel that some other supervisory staff do not always know the best way to deal with poor behaviour.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good. The school environment is very safe and secure. Procedures to ensure the safeguarding of all pupils are very effective and meet all statutory requirements.
- Attendance has risen each year for the last three years and is now above the national average.
- Considerable thought and care has been put into making the school site a stimulating area in which pupils can play and learn constructively. There is virtually no litter and pupils take care of the school environment.

The leadership and management are good

- For the first time in several years, the school began this year with a full team of senior and other leaders. The stability and consistency that this has brought, is making a substantial difference to the school.
- Teaching is improving across the school and many areas of weakness have been effectively tackled. Pupils' rates of progress have improved dramatically and the school now has a culture of high expectations and achievement.
- A strong focus on reading and writing has produced significant improvements. Younger pupils are on track to make progress that is in line with national averages.
- Leaders demonstrate a commitment to equality of opportunity by keeping a close eye on the progress of more disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs. Systems for monitoring this are good, and effective support and intervention have been supplied to help pupils who fall behind.
- Leaders and governors have effectively eradicated all that is inadequate over the last two years. They have been largely successful, but the focus on this has meant that development planning and self-evaluation has not focused sufficiently on improving beyond the removal of 'special measures'. Self-evaluation is not sufficiently objective or analytical to drive the next stage of improvement planning.
- Considerable effort has been put into improving the school's work with parents, which has been highly successful with many. There are, however, some parents and families in the community who are much more difficult to draw in to good communication with the school. Pupils highlighted some examples of ineffective communication with their homes, such as not receiving letters about events in sufficient time.
- The support provided by the local authority has been in the form of consultant time, extra time from the school improvement adviser and the brokering the National Leaders of Education and Governance who have worked with the school. Action was also taken to help reform the governing body, and this is now showing positive impact. Whilst this external support was initially slow to take effect, it has also been critical in helping the school to improve.

■ The governance of the school:

- There have been major changes to the governing body in the last year. An experienced new Chair was appointed and most of the governors are newly appointed or elected.
- Support from the local authority and a National Leader of Governance have helped governors to reorganise their ways of working and to engage much more closely with the work of the school.
- The performance management of teachers and the headteacher is thorough and rigorous. The governing body ensures that increases in pay are linked closely to the achievement of pupils.
- Governors now have a very good and developing understanding of pupils' achievements, the quality of teaching and the needs of the school. They make regular visits and share with leaders in checking the quality of provision.
- The governing body now has the people, the enthusiasm and commitment to drive the school's improvement. Training has been identified for some governors to ensure there is sufficient expertise in all areas.
- All statutory responsibilities are fully recognised, including monitoring the impact of additional funding. The school is in a financially healthy position.

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	112633
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	441755

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	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shelagh Moody
Headteacher	Sue Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	27 November 2012
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