

Springside School

Albert Royds Street, Rochdale, Manchester, OL16 2SU

Inspection dates 24–25 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Leadership has suffered setbacks and until recently this had an adverse impact on the school's high expectations.
- Checks on the effectiveness of the school's work have not been enough to sustain a good rate of improvement. This has resulted in this previously outstanding school now requiring improvement.
- Leaders have not been getting as much as they needed from checking pupils' progress or the quality of teaching to make both good.
- The impact of the pupil premium on improving the progress of pupils supported by the premium and the extent of narrowing the gap with other pupils has not been thoroughly checked.
- A check has not been done on how effectively the school uses the physical education (PE) and sport funding to increase pupils' participation in PE and sports.
- Occasionally, what teachers want pupils to learn is not made as clear and precise as pupils need. In these instances, teaching and the support given by teaching assistants is less effective, and there is not enough consistency in what adults expect of pupils.
- Too many pupils make less than the progress expected of them from their starting points. Although the number of pupils affected in this way has been reducing over the past three years, they are still a significant minority of pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Current senior leadership is making sure the school maintains clear direction and has high expectations. Leaders and governors have the capacity to improve the school. They are planning improvement effectively and driving it robustly.
- The curriculum is well planned and managed effectively by subject leaders.
- Pupils are well supported and expertly cared for so that their needs are met and they are ready and prepared to learn.
- Pupils enjoy school, work hard and are eager to learn. Their behaviour is good and the few who have difficulty in behaving well make good progress. Pupils feel safe and stay safe.
- The majority of pupils make the progress expected of them and many do better than this, the most able pupils in particular.
- The early years provision is well led and managed. Teachers and their assistants are an effective, well-organised and sharply focused team. They are constantly active with pupils and are good in encouraging them to take part and contribute to all of the activities.
- Children in the early years make more than the progress expected of them, especially in their personal and social development, physical development and communication.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited nine lessons and observed eight of the school's 10 teachers and lesson taught by a higher level teaching assistant. The headteacher joined inspectors in observing two of the nine lessons seen.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and teachers, representatives of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- An inspector spoke to a group of pupils and listened to a small group of others reading.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school's documents, including information on pupils' progress, the school development plan, policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils and an evaluation by the local authority of the school's work and effectiveness.
- Inspectors were unable to take account of the views of the parents who used Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) because there were too few responses. However, inspectors took account of the school's recent survey of parents' views about the school.

Inspection team

Alan Lemon, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Potter

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a small school which provides education for pupils with a wide range of disabilities or special educational needs. Almost all pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The large majority of pupils have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties, which affect their physical abilities, speech, language and communication. There are also a small number of pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Many pupils have additional health complications. In addition to learning difficulties, a significant minority have differing degrees of autism.
- The proportion of pupils of minority ethnic heritage is well above average, as is the proportion learning to speak English.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school is co-located with a mainstream primary school.
- The school is led by an acting headteacher who took up post three weeks before this inspection.
- Inspectors were aware during this inspection of an investigation into a serious allegation about restriction of liberty at the setting. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate an allegation of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the allegation were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring:
 - all teachers' assessments are accurate in determining each pupils' point in learning in all subjects
 - that when teachers plan pupils' work they use assessment effectively to set learning objectives that are as clear and precise as pupils need, and that whatever their needs and capabilities all pupils are challenged, learn well and make good progress.
- Increase the rigour of leaders' oversight of the school's work by:
 - giving greater depth of analysis to the assessment of pupils' progress with the aim of eliminating the proportion of pupils who make less than the progress expected of them
 - using robust analysis of assessments to identify the steps necessary to ensure all pupils, whatever their needs and capabilities, make good progress
 - confirming that teachers make good progress in tackling areas for improvement identified in the checks made on the quality of their teaching.
- Leaders, managers and governors should report on the pupil premium funds received; how the funding is spent and why, and evaluate the difference made to the learning and progress of all disadvantaged pupils.
- An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
- Leaders, managers and governors should report on how the school uses the primary school PE and sport premium to improve the quality and breadth of PE and sport provision and to evaluate the extent to which pupils have increased their participation in sport.
- 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 leadership and management **requires improvement**

- The copious amount of assessment information is systematically analysed to reach a broad picture of the amount of progress made by different groups of pupils. However, leaders' analyses have not gone deep enough to reveal the precise actions required to tackle reducing that proportion of pupils now making less than expected progress.
- Leaders have not made a detailed analysis of the impact of spending the pupil premium beyond ascertaining that pupils supported by the pupil premium make the same progress as others, but not whether their progress has improved. The school's policy on the use of the premium sets a requirement of termly reports.
- The spending of the physical education and sports premium is aimed appropriately at extending opportunities for pupils' physical development and interest in sport. There is no process, however, to check how well the use of the funding meets these aims.
- While leaders are wholehearted in advancing the opportunities of all pupils, the shortcomings in understanding why some do not progress as well as others undermines the school's pursuit of the ideal of equal opportunities.
- Regular checks on the quality of teaching identify improvements needed, which fits with the school's policy on teachers' appraisal and the management of their performance. However, from one check to the next, teachers' progress in areas identified as needing improvement is not always followed up robustly by leaders.
- The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and meet requirements.
- The drive for improvement is a joint effort. Staff are united behind leaders, their morale is high and they operate with a common sense of purpose.
- Parents hold the school in high esteem and are assured that their children's well-being and development are promoted effectively.
- The local authority's review of the school's work has given focus to the right areas for improvement and these form the school's current development plan. Further development of middle leadership is a key priority, as some roles that were lost as teachers retired have yet to be replaced.
- The curriculum offers pupils a breadth of experiences in school and beyond, which help them learn about the world and prepares them for the future. The curriculum strongly reflects the cultural and religious diversity of Britain; it helps pupils understand how values and beliefs are shaped and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring experience and expertise to supporting and holding the school to account. They understand their roles and the appropriate relationship with leaders and the school in order to challenge effectively. Governors ensure the school has all the required policies and review these systematically. Governors are up to date with the work of the school through scrutiny of leaders' reports and their regular focused visits. They are effective in checking for themselves that the school maintains its aims and ethos, that reports on the quality of teaching match what they see, and that pupils are learning and making progress. Governors give close attention to pupils' progress, although the level of challenge they can offer is restricted by the limited detail provided by data supplied in reports. Therefore, they are not in a strong position to test leaders' assessment of teaching against that of pupils' progress. While they have called for reports on the use of the pupil premium funding, these have not been supplied in the detail needed to show them how well the funding is spent.

The behaviour and safety of pupils **are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy their life in school, as well as their activities in the classroom and beyond. The playground is a happy place where pupils enjoy the space and each other's company during playtime. Lunch and snack time are good social occasions. Pupils happily eat together and help each other.
- Attendance is average. Unauthorised absences are very low. Pupils are absent mostly because of medical appointments and sickness. The home-school worker keeps in close contact with families and is rigorous in following up any unexplained absences. This work has improved attendance in particular by gaining parents' support in getting their children to school every day.
- Relationships with adults and with each other are very positive. Adults know pupils well and are attentive

to their needs and this creates calm. There are clear expectations for good behaviour and pupils show willingness to stick to routines.

- Thorough assessment of pupils' behavioural difficulties, starting in the early years, leads to well-planned strategies for the management of these difficulties and to significant improvements in behaviour.
- Pupils enjoy learning and are eager to take part in lessons. Good behaviour, such as sitting, paying attention and making contributions are all consistent features of lessons.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are closely supervised by the large team of staff who ensure pupils stay safe at all times.
- A recent survey of parents shows they are confident their children are cared for well.
- Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. School records indicate there is no bullying and while the behaviour of a few has been at times extremely challenging, there have been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions. The pupils spoken with say they are never bullied and if it did happen they know to tell an adult.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching overall has not been good enough to significantly improve the achievement of those pupils whose progress is less than expected.
- Some limited use of assessment hampers good lesson planning and occasionally undermines the learning of all groups of pupils but more so those who are less able. In the case of a few most able pupils, assessments underestimated their level of skills in reading and writing, adversely affecting planning to meet their needs.
- In drawing up plans for lessons, it is occasionally the case that insufficient attention is given to ensuring that pupils are set work at an appropriate level of difficulty, which is matched well to their different special educational needs and the stage they are at in their learning.
- In these instances, there is too much emphasis on planning and preparing an activity and not enough thought to what pupils should learn according to their needs by completing the activity. This focus on pupils starting and finishing tasks, particularly the less able pupils, takes away from accurate assessment of what is learnt in the course of lessons.
- Teachers and classroom assistants know pupils well, have good relationships with them and manage their behaviour well. Lessons are almost always calm and orderly. In the best instances, teaching assistants are alert and anticipate and pre-empt risks.
- Where teaching is effective, consummate skill and expertise is applied to planning appropriately challenging work for pupils of all abilities and needs. What pupils should learn next is made clear. Sight is not lost of what progress is expected of pupils and as a result, they are well supported and learn effectively. Pupils are given good opportunities to say or show what they have learnt. Good planning and clearly stated aims for what each pupil should learn also ensures that assessment during lessons is sharply focused and an accurate record is made of what pupils have achieved.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- While leaders and teachers are actively engaged in improving the performance of those pupils making less than the progress expected of them, until very recently actions have lacked the urgency and the robust strategies required to quickly reduce the number of pupils who are not performing well.
- The pattern of outcomes for disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium matches that of other pupils, including the proportion making less than expected progress. However, the extent to which the gap between the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and other pupils has narrowed is uncertain because this information is not readily available. A precise measure of the attainment gap is not known as the impact from pupil premium spending has not been rigorously tracked and analysed by leaders.
- Pupils' work is occasionally not well matched to their different abilities or is not planned with the necessary precision to ensure effective learning happens. This affects the pupils with severe learning difficulties most although, at times in lessons, the most able pupils as well.
- A few pupils showed they were capable of a higher level of work than they were being asked to do. A pupil who had early writing skills spent more time on much less challenging work of cutting and sticking rather than writing skills being actively developed.
- It is more typical that the most able pupils and those with moderate learning difficulties are challenged by their work. Teachers' assessments and the learning taking place in lessons demonstrate almost all of these

pupils make the progress expected of them and a good proportion do better than this.

- In one case, a teacher suspected that a more able pupil had good writing skills which was not apparent from his earlier assessments but, helped to overcome reluctance and challenged to do so, wrote a simple sentence with the correct spellings.
- Across the school, those pupils who are able write put their thoughts and observations down on paper with good handwriting and accurate spelling.
- The recent initiative to improve reading is a positive development increasing pupils' interest and enjoyment of books and their word skills. The new reading scheme is contributing to the systematic improvement of reading skills throughout the school.
- Reading and listening to stories in lessons is a source of pleasure for pupils and the most able pupils actively talk about stories and their characters. While not all pupils who can read are active readers, most read and understand information, text and instructions.
- Most pupils recognise numbers, order them correctly and count objects accurately. Pupils progress steadily to managing larger numbers, counting down, from 10 for example, and counting on from a given number. They learn to recognise and name a square, rectangle, triangle and circle and most able pupils describe some of the properties of these shapes.

The early years provision

is good

- Leadership of the early years provision is good.
- Early years staff create a good supportive relationship with each child and when they see progress they give warm praise, which motivates and encourages the children to achieve more.
- They maintain close daily contact with parents and keep them well informed of their children's needs and progress. The home/school support worker ensures there are no language barriers to communicating with parents and acts as an effective link between school, families and support services in the community.
- The good assessment of progress and the progress seen during activities, show children make significant gains in their personal, social and emotional development, physical development and in their communication.
- The good variety of resources, well-planned teaching and activities has a positive effect on learning in all areas, as well as improving children's independence.
- Children are active in choosing activities and what they would prefer to eat and drink at snack time. They develop their liking for a wider range of food and make good progress in drinking from a cup and holding and eating with a spoon.
- Children's communication develops well, whether using speaking and listening or signs and symbols, and underpins their increasing engagement in the world around them. Their daily activities improve walking, climbing and the skills to handle objects and tools.
- The children with profound and multiple learning difficulties are given a good variety of sensory experiences, which improves their engagement, feelings, awareness and their range of responses.
- Children's behaviour is well managed. The very challenging behaviour of some children is handled with consistency and very sensitively.

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	135200
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	448939

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Schofield
Acting Interim Headteacher	Clare John
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2012
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