

Springwell School

Wiltshire Way, Hartlepool, TS26 0TB

Inspection dates 25–26 February 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Outstanding leadership and management have led to outstanding teaching and achievement across the whole school. From their low starting points, pupils' make outstanding progress in the development of their numeracy and literacy skills.
- Early years provision is exceptional and enables children to make outstanding progress over time.
- The inspirational headteacher and highly committed governors and senior leaders have successfully built on the many strengths identified at the time of the previous inspection, to ensure every pupil achieves the best they possibly can. The school, therefore, continues to improve apace.
- Middle leaders, together with the senior leadership team, have successfully revised the curriculum and implemented new assessment procedures, which are in their final stages of development and support pupils' progress and attainment well.
- Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's work and are instrumental in moving the school forward. They also ensure that safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.
- The school is held in very high esteem by parents and the local authority.
- Pupils enjoy attending school, display exemplary behaviour and say they feel safe and looked after very well.
- British values are very well promoted through the skilfully adapted curriculum, preparing pupils most effectively for the next stage in their education and for life in modern Britain.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes and carried out some observations jointly with the headteacher. They also attended an assembly.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and a group of parents, including a parent governor.
- Inspectors spoke formally and informally with pupils about their experiences at school and listened to their views and heard some of them read.
- The inspectors looked at the school's work and scrutinised a range of documentation, including information about pupils' performance and progress, their written work, procedures for safeguarding and monitoring attendance, school improvement planning and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Account was taken of the 18 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and also from completed staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Maureen Coleman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alastair Younger

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This primary special school serves the whole of Hartlepool and provides for pupils with a very wide range of learning difficulties. Many pupils have severe or profound learning difficulties. A significant number also have additional difficulties and disabilities, including emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, autism and sensory impairment. A significant number of pupils also find it difficult to communicate effectively.
- Pupils attending the school join at various times throughout the school year. Just under one-third of the pupils are dual registered, attending Springwell on a placement from their primary schools for short or extended periods of time. Pupils attending the school are either currently undergoing assessment for specific needs or have an Educational Health and Care Plan.
- Early years provision is full time.
- The large majority of pupils are White British, with a small number from a diverse range of minority ethnic heritages.
- There is a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for support through the pupil premium funding, which provides support for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has gained many awards since the previous inspection, including the National Autistic Society's accreditation, Investors in People and the Youth Sport Trust Gold Quality Mark.
- The school is part of the Hartlepool Teaching Schools Alliance and the North East Special Schools Teaching Partnership. The school's outreach programme is used extensively and provides expertise and support to mainstream schools, their pupils and families.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Fully implement the new arrangements for assessment by July 2015 so that it impacts fully on pupils' performance.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and senior leaders are passionate in their commitment to meeting the individual and specific needs of each and every pupil. A culture of high expectations is well established and staff are dedicated to supporting pupils' personal and academic development to the utmost. This has enabled the school to build on the many strengths found at the time of the previous inspection and to continue to improve.
- Middle leaders ensure there is a strong focus on excellence in all teaching and learning activities so that pupils can make the best possible progress, regardless of their starting points. Assessment procedures are secure but the newly-established systems are not fully implemented and, therefore, their impact on pupils' progress and attainment is not fully measured and recorded.
- Pupils are encouraged to use their understanding of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) to support and develop a love of books and reading. The most able readers become confident and read with enjoyment, understanding and expression.
- Leaders challenge staff very effectively, constantly driving school improvement, but also providing high-quality support to ensure the school sustains and builds on its outstanding practice.
- Staff are overwhelmingly positive about being part of this strong learning community. They welcome opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge so that they can find new solutions to pupils' difficulties and thus ensure that each individual has an equal opportunity to succeed. Discrimination in all its forms is rejected.
- Pupils' health and well-being are paramount and leaders at all levels have created an ethos and culture where pupils thrive. Instances of bullying are very rare.
- The curriculum is well planned and meets the needs of the pupils exceptionally well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the centre of the school's work and prepares pupils exceptionally well for life in modern Britain. Traditional British values of respect and tolerance are emphasised across the school.
- Attendance is monitored closely and school fosters excellent relationships with parents who hold the school in very high esteem. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and very satisfied with its work. They value the very strong partnership they have with school staff and are confident their children are looked after very well and exceptionally well taught. The school fosters good relations with all.
- Additional funding, including the pupil premium, is used exceptionally well to enhance the curriculum and provide exciting experiences for the pupils to undertake a wide range of high-quality sporting and residential activities. The annual summer school is held in very high regard and valued immensely by pupils and their families.
- Transition arrangements for pupils joining and leaving the school are very well managed and highly effective.
- The quality of teaching is very closely monitored and information gathered is successfully used as part of staff performance management. Staff are fully aware of their accountability for pupils' achievement.
- Safeguarding practices are fully established, highly effective and meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body makes an excellent contribution to the school's work and shares the leaders' uncompromising drive and ambition to do everything possible to meet the needs of all pupils. Governors have carried out an audit of their own skills and contribute positively to the school's development planning.
 - Governors have a secure and accurate knowledge of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning through receiving reports from senior leaders and through their own observations from their frequent visits to school.
 - Governors make sure teachers are suitably rewarded for good performance, related to the quality of their teaching and pupils' achievement. Governors also have an impressive understanding of data and are thus clear and accurate in their judgements about the school's effectiveness.
 - They monitor the spending of the pupil premium funding closely and ensure that it continues to have a positive effect on the personal and academic achievement of the pupils for whom it is intended.
 - The governing body includes a number of parent governors who bring a particular insight and understanding about how well their children are taught and about how well the school meets their needs.
 - Governors ensure all legal requirements for safeguarding and the welfare and interests of pupils are in

place by updating policies, making sure training is up to date and that procedures for vetting the suitability of staff and visitors are rigorous. They also have a very good grasp of the school's finances and know exactly how any additional funding is used to bring about positive outcomes for pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils love their school and demonstrate thoughtful behaviour towards each other and the staff, which embellishes the school's very positive ethos and contributes significantly towards their highly successful learning.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour impacts exceptionally well on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as they grow rapidly in confidence.
- The work in pupils' books show they make every effort to complete tasks set and, furthermore, the very high standard of presentation demonstrates the pride and enjoyment they have in their work. In lessons, pupils apply themselves exceptionally well and readily take part in all activities.
- Attendance is high, with unauthorised absence rare and any authorised absences are as a result of medical conditions and pupils' need for constant treatment. The school works very closely with therapists and parents to make sure pupils have as little time away from school as possible.
- Pupils are very well aware of the school's high expectations for their behaviour. The clear systems for class and school rewards are well embedded and have a significant impact on their conduct.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- The school provides exemplary care for all its pupils, many of whom need sensitive support.
- Pupils feel very safe and have trusting relationships with all staff. They are treated with dignity and respect by all adults and, in turn, treat one another with kindness. They readily help each other, showing tolerance and sensitivity towards each other's differing needs.
- They are very well informed about how to keep themselves safe, including on the internet, and the school ensures they know about the different forms of bullying including homophobic, racist and other forms of bullying based on prejudice.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Pupils' written work, the school's information about their progress and learning seen in lessons clearly demonstrate that teaching over time and across a range of subjects and key stages, including the early years is never less than good and is outstanding overall. This results in outstanding achievement for all groups of pupils.
- Very good relationships and positive classrooms ensure pupils engage fully in lessons. Behaviour is managed exceptionally well.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are seen working closely together in lessons to make sure tasks are carefully matched to each individual pupil's learning needs. On-going assessments are used well to redirect learning and to record the gains individual pupils make towards their individual targets. The new assessment system is impressive, but is not completely implemented and it is, therefore, too early to see its full impact on pupils' performance.
- The detailed marking and annotation of pupils' work in their books highlight the progress they are making and clearly identify the next steps in their learning.
- Adults use a range of approaches to enable pupils to understand, including signing, objects and symbols. On occasions, a combination of these techniques is used so that pupils are able to understand more and take an even greater part in learning. Furthermore, this enables all pupils from their very low starting points to make rapid and sustained gains in literacy, reading and mathematics.
- Resources are of a very high standard and extremely well chosen. This was seen in a science lesson on electricity where pupils greatly enjoyed their experiences and remained thoroughly focussed on solving problems using their newly acquired knowledge and understanding to build increasingly challenging electrical circuits.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- As a consequence of pupils' complex learning difficulties, their attainment when they first join the school is significantly below average, compared to schools nationally. However, from these starting points all pupils make sustained and outstanding progress, particularly in their reading, writing, mathematics and communication skills.
- Moreover, inspection evidence, including a scrutiny of pupils' work, a consideration of progress data and observations of learning in class, demonstrate that they also make consistently good and often outstanding progress in other subjects.
- The school has developed its own system for assessing pupils' needs in depth when they join the school, so that their progress from their starting points can be measured accurately. This is used very effectively to target the right level of work and challenge for individual pupils and their progress can be measured in very small steps.
- There are no significant differences in achievement between different groups of pupils, including boys and girls, those known to be eligible for additional funding and those from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Pupils make exceptional progress in their personal, social and health education because this permeates the life of the school. Pupils show an eagerness to learn and are encouraged to promote their independence to equip them with the necessary skills to prepare them for the next stage in their education and also life beyond school.
- The most able pupils learn about phonics and read with expression and interest. They talk with enthusiasm and knowledge about different books, and authors, and understand the importance in becoming confident readers to enable them to make the most of opportunities they may have in the future.
- Aspirational targets and high expectations for all are the norm. Pupils are justly proud of their achievements. The skilfully adapted and highly appropriate curriculum and the praise and verbal feedback given to pupils from all adults ensure pupils continue to deepen their understanding; they increase the pace of their learning as they progress through the school and strive to do the best that they can at all times.

The early years provision is outstanding

- Most children enter school with skills and knowledge which are low compared to those typical for their age.
- Thorough analysis of their needs and abilities by teachers and other adults support their learning and enables children to make outstanding progress. This prepares them very well for their life in school.
- Teaching is outstanding. Clear and consistent role modelling by all adults and the use of highly effective communication strategies, provide a rich variety of activities and a positive environment which stimulate and engage children very well.
- Regular and accurate checks are made on children's learning and progress. Individual 'learning journals' contain regular and detailed observations of their progress. Photographic evidence is used to very good effect and builds a strong picture of outstanding progress through a range of exciting and stimulating activities.
- Parents feel most welcome and are very well supported. They speak very highly of the exceptional relationships between the school, home and external agencies and are delighted that they are encouraged to be fully involved in the education of their children.
- Children are kept very safe and secure and there are robust policies and procedures in place to guarantee their well-being.
- Leadership and management are exceptional. There are very high expectations of the performance of staff and resources are used very well to create a stimulating environment and a curriculum which is often shared with other pupils working at this level within school.

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	111785
Local authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	448054

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	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Barraclough
Headteacher	Karl Telfer
Date of previous school inspection	29 May 2012
Telephone number	01429 280600
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