

Springfield Christian School

145 Perry Hill, Catford, London SE6 4LP

Inspection dates

13–15 October 2015

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The proprietors have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for safeguarding, health and safety and risk assessment, and consequently leadership and management is inadequate.
- The proprietors do not carry out the required checks on the suitability of all staff to work with children in accordance with statutory requirements from the Secretary of State.
- The school does not provide up-to-date information for parents on its website, particularly the safeguarding policy. The provision of the required information in school is too informal.
- Teaching does not provide a high level of challenge for all pupils.
- Leaders and governors do not have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Improvement planning does not identify the right priorities or seek to monitor the school's work robustly.
- The proprietors have not ensured that new senior leaders receive up-to-date training to enable them to fulfil their roles effectively. Leaders' evaluation of teaching and its impact on children's achievement is underdeveloped.
- Early years provision in the Nursery is inadequate. Assessment of children's abilities is weak. Staff do not systematically record and use meaningful evidence to plan challenging experiences.

The school has the following strengths

- By the end of the early years every child achieved a good level of development in 2015.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy what the school has to offer; they participate enthusiastically in worship and songs. They feel safe in school and show respectful attitudes to each other.
- Parents speak highly about the school. They trust staff and commend the school's kind approach.
- Staff create a caring environment; they develop consistently thoughtful and supportive relationships. They are keen to get it right, and respond positively to constructive feedback.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities are promoted well. Pupils are actively taught about different cultures and lifestyles.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that all the independent school standards are met
 - clarifying the function, roles and responsibilities of the proprietors, senior leaders and governing body
 - swiftly establishing a governing body with the required skills to function strategically and hold leaders to account in order to ensure rapid improvement
 - addressing the school's weaknesses through implementing a sharply focused action plan that includes tight timescales and specific monitoring roles for leaders and governors
 - ensuring that all statutory policies are up to date, agreed by governors, actively shared with parents and implemented effectively.
- Improve the school's safeguarding arrangements by:
 - implementing a safeguarding policy that reflects current guidance in keeping children safe
 - conducting all the relevant checks to ensure the suitability of staff, and recording these outcomes appropriately
 - implementing the school's health and safety policies
 - involving staff and governors in risk assessment and taking responsibility for attending to risk.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - systematically and robustly checking the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school
 - making sure that adults provide children with work that matches their abilities and interests
 - establishing children's starting points, regularly checking their progress and acting on this information
 - providing children with opportunities to think for themselves and apply their learning in different ways.
- Improve the quality of provision in early years by:
 - ensuring that the early years leader supports and monitors teaching and learning in the Nursery
 - reviewing and developing assessment strategies
 - providing adults with professional development opportunities to update and improve their work
- The school must meet the following independent school standards:
 - Ensure that education provides pupils with experiences in creative and aesthetic education through implementing a scheme of work for music (paragraph 2(2)(a)).
 - Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
 - The proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy (paragraph 11).
 - Ensure that the welfare of pupils is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraphs 16, 16(a) and 16(b)).
 - The proprietor ensures that appropriate checks are completed before a person's appointment. (paragraphs 18(2)(b) and 18(3)).
 - The proprietor keeps a register which shows such information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) in relation to staff suitability (paragraphs 21(1), 21(3) and 21(3)(a)(iii)).
 - The proprietor provides suitable accommodation in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils; and accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and which is near to a toilet facility (paragraphs 24(1), 24(1)(a) and 24(1)(b)).
 - The proprietor ensures that provision of information by the school is met where the particulars of the arrangements made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school are published on the

school's internet website; and that following an inspection a copy of the report is published and maintained on the school's website (paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(d) and 32(1)(j)).

- The proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; that they fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and that they actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c) and 34(2)).
- The proprietor must address non-compliance with statutory requirements of the early years:
- Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development (paragraph 1.7).
 - Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity (paragraph 1.9).
 - A quality learning experience for children requires a quality workforce (paragraph 1.12).
 - Assessment must play an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs and to plan activities and support (paragraph 2.1).
 - The school safeguarding policy must meet the statutory procedures (paragraph 3.3).
 - The proprietor must take appropriate action to ensure the safety of children in the event of the disqualification of a person employed in the setting or living in the same household (paragraph 3.14).
 - Providers must have and implement a health and safety policy and procedures which cover identifying, reporting and dealing with accidents, hazards and faulty equipment (paragraph 3.53).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Leadership of the school is inadequate. The proprietors have not ensured that their regulatory responsibilities are met. The procedures for formal review and implementation of policies for safeguarding, welfare, health and safety are weak.
- The proprietors and governors have not ensured that safeguarding has a high priority in school. The safeguarding policy does not meet current requirements. It was only updated during the inspection to include reference to child sexual exploitation and forced marriage in accordance with the statutory guidance contained in *Keeping children safe in education*, published in July 2015.
- The school's safer recruitment policy is not implemented; the relevant checks to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children are not consistently carried out. Adults commence employment pending certain checks such as those for disqualification by association and poor references. Risk assessments in these cases are not systematically monitored by senior leaders. These omissions place children at risk.
- The required safeguarding and welfare policies were not available on the school's website at the start of the inspection. Policies are available to parents in school, if they ask, but leaders do not actively provide parents with the required and updated information.
- The proprietors have failed to ensure that senior leaders have the required skills or professional support to manage the school effectively. The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed to their current roles in September. They have had no experience of evaluating teaching. Joint work of this nature with the inspector was the first time senior leaders had carried out this type of monitoring activity. The headteacher focuses on day-to-day management duties. The current arrangements do not allow her to operate strategically. The capacity for improvement is poor.
- The early years leader, who is also the designated person for safeguarding, has insufficient time during the day to carry out her strategic leadership role efficiently. The headteacher, functioning as special educational needs co-ordinator in addition to her other responsibilities, has not attended the required accredited course to fulfil this role confidently. In-house training, provided by one of the proprietors, is not good enough.
- There is no formal system to monitor the school's work. The school's leaders do not use their informal 'drop-ins' to provide robust evidence about the quality of learning and standards. For example, the organisation of Spanish in the Nursery, jointly observed by the inspector and deputy headteacher, was not fit for purpose. Children did not show positive attitudes during the session because they were bored, the five additional adults did not contribute effectively, and worksheets did not help children practise their oral skills. This inadequacy had not been identified prior to inspection.
- School improvement planning is confused. The current priorities make little reference to improving standards, the quality of teaching or checking regulatory requirements. Of the three action plans, none indicate monitoring checks by leaders or governors, and no timescales state when agreed priorities must be achieved.
- The school does not have a coherent system to track or monitor pupils' performance precisely. Consequently, leaders do not have an accurate understanding of the outcomes for different pupils or their links to the quality of teaching.
- The school is effective at promoting opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of other faiths and cultures because they study different religions and customs. They told the inspector about Eid and about important role models from other cultures such as Nelson Mandela. The curriculum also provides useful opportunities for pupils to visit places of worship and cultural significance.
- School leaders are very clear about the importance of equality of opportunity. They challenge stereotypes through assemblies and personal and social education. They support parents and staff to contribute to the local community and encourage them to be involved in school. For example, parents who are Jewish, social workers, health officers and accountants talk to pupils about their commitment to work. This promotes British values well. Pupils have high aspirations as a result: for example, a group of pupils told the inspector of their ambitions to become doctors, pastors and scientists.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the school is inadequate. Neither proprietors nor governors have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards. There is no planning to check that these continue to be met.

- The leadership structure lacks accountability because the proprietors do not share information about important aspects of the school with governors and senior leaders, for example finances, performance management, budget control and strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning.
 - Governors are not involved in drafting or monitoring the school's action plans. Governors do not systematically check the school's work, relying instead on the proprietors to provide this information. This restricts their capacity to hold leaders to account and limits their strategic overview of the school.
 - In the summer term, governors consulted parents about the proposed change to become a smaller preparatory school. They have yet to confirm the structure or membership of the new governing body.
 - The proprietors have not ensured the suitability of staff. The systems for carrying out the required checks before a person's employment begins are weak. Leaders do not have the required training to fulfil their roles effectively, for example in the management of special educational needs, health and safety, performance management, evaluating teaching and governance.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because pupils are not making enough progress. Teachers do not provide sufficient challenge to enable all pupils to achieve as highly as they can.
- Teachers use different commercial schemes to teach the curriculum, most with pre-prepared schemes of work and lesson activities. These materials are not routinely adapted to pitch work at the right level for pupils, and thus limit their achievement.
- Adults' subject knowledge is stronger in English than it is in mathematics, which is reflected in the quality of pupils' work. Pupils are encouraged to write for different reasons across the curriculum. They apply their knowledge of phonics (the sounds letters make) and grammar well to produce imaginary and factual pieces of writing.
- Pupils' written work is supplemented by opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, shown, for example, in their ability to state their opinions about different poems. Pupils' personal development and social skills are encouraged through meaningful discussions about healthy eating and different ways to show responsibility within the local community.
- Adults promote pupils' reading fluency effectively. From an early age children experience storytelling. Pupils read confidently, using phonics skills to work out unfamiliar words. They enjoy reading and know how to choose books from the school's well-stocked library.
- Pupils told the inspector about their favourite subjects which were predominantly practical lessons where adults provide pupils with the opportunity to think for themselves. For example, they especially enjoyed investigating the effect of different water temperature and cleaning glitter from their hands.
- Adults do not have the same understanding about how to develop and extend pupils' mathematical skills. Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to solve problems; too much teaching emphasises practising number bonds and simple algorithms. This restricts pupils' ability to apply their knowledge in different situations.
- Adults assess pupils' work using national norms to which half-termly effort grades are added. Pupils understand this approach so that they know when they have not worked hard enough. However, adults do not use assessment effectively to adapt or change their plans quickly enough to respond to the different aptitudes and learning needs of pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to keep pupils safe is inadequate. The school fails to ensure that all the required safety measures are in place. Safeguarding procedures are inadequate and the relevant regulations are not met.
- The school's procedures to ensure the health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors are not implemented effectively. The headteacher undertakes the required safety checks of electrical appliances and fire equipment and regular evacuation practices are carried out. However, during the inspection a number of health and safety issues were identified. For example, behind an unfixed low screen in the baby room, cupboards and drawers containing equipment such as scissors had no child safety latches. An unlocked toilet cubicle adjacent to the library was found to have a faulty water heater where urgent action to

rectify this was not taken. No evidence was available to suggest that proprietors or governors monitor the implementation of the school's risk assessment or health and safety policies.

- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They could not recall any incidents of bullying. This was confirmed by the inspector's analysis of behaviour records. Pupils are aware of cyber bullying and what to do to stay safe online. Parents say that they are reassured that access to the school site is secure and controlled.
- Medical facilities and the short-term care of children who may be injured do not meet the required regulations. A portable bed that has to be erected in an emergency is not suitable. Additionally, the medical room does not have readily available first aid equipment or hygienic facilities to deal with bodily fluids. The correct number of staff have first aid and paediatric accredited training.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils do not always behave well enough during their lessons to benefit from their learning. When pupils are interested in their learning they are confident and work together well, side by side, but when lessons are not matched to their needs they become bored and disinterested.
- Punctuality is poor. During the inspection, eight children trickled in late for assembly, accompanied by their parents. The last arrived 25 minutes after the start of the school day. The headteacher states that she intends to send attendance and punctuality warning letters on a half-termly basis. However, this response lacks urgency.
- At lunch and playtime children get along together well, they follow routines to move around the school calmly, quickly following adults' instructions.
- Pupils are polite and caring to those around them. They enjoy coming to school and they comment positively on the school's small size because they like to know everyone around them. They express a strong sense of right and wrong, sometimes with reference to the Bible.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are caring. Children from a young age are encouraged to take responsibility for keeping the classroom tidy and well organised. Older pupils take pride in the jobs they are given to promote their responsibilities outside the classroom. This more positive behaviour contributes to the school's thoughtful ethos.
- Attendance for most pupils is above average. When attendance drops, the school follows up appropriately with parents or external agencies to provide additional support.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils enter the school with skills and abilities broadly in line with those typical for their age. By the time they leave, at the end of Year 6, attainment in national tests is average. Too few pupils reach the higher levels in English, mathematics and science. The school ceased educating Key Stage 2 pupils in July 2015. No detailed analysis was available about pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 5 or in the most recent Year 6 national tests.
- The number of pupils in Year 2 is very small. With due consideration to this, pupils' attainment in end of Key Stage 1 tests is average, but too few attain the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils do not make good progress from the time they leave the early years because the work provided for them lacks challenge, despite small class sizes.
- The inspector sampled the work of Key Stage 1 pupils with senior leaders, confirming that not enough pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics. Worksheets and tasks in pupils' folders do not consistently challenge pupils because there is too much repetition of basic skills they have already accomplished.
- The work and individual plans for disabled pupils and those with special education needs show that they are supported well to meet their learning targets. Pupil numbers are too small for accurate comparisons with national rates of progress.

Early years provision

is inadequate

- The leadership and management of the early years are inadequate due to regulatory failures in safeguarding, health and safety and the suitability of staff. Early years statutory requirements are not met in the Nursery, particularly those relating to assessment and planning.
- Nursery children's attendance varies. Some parents choose to supplement the 15 hours' free entitlement with additional hours. Children enter the Nursery and Reception at different points during the year. Their

attainment upon entry varies but is mostly typical for their age. During their differing amounts of time in the Nursery some children, but not all, make expected progress in readiness for the Reception Year.

- Levels of supervision are high, with up to five adults deployed in the Nursery class containing no more than 20 children. Despite this deployment, adults do not sufficiently exploit the children's potential for making rapid gains in what they know, understand and can do. Consequently, children's achievement is not good enough nor does it represent efficient value for money.
- Last year the five children in Reception made good progress from their starting points. They all achieved a good level of development and some exceeded it. This was confirmed by local authority moderation of their end of early years profiles. Cohort numbers are too small to analyse the achievement of different groups or curriculum areas, but the school's information indicates that children's skills in computing and technology are underdeveloped.
- The inspector sampled the work of two children who speak English as an additional language. In these two cases the children make stronger progress than others because of the additional support they receive in class. Numbers of children are too small for comparison with school or national trends.
- Adults in the Nursery do not assess children's achievement proficiently. They keep brief daily notes on children's welfare and diet, but records about learning and development are weak. Consequently, adults' expectations are too low. Children's basic skills in writing, reading and mathematics are poor as a result.
- Assessment practice is inconsistent. Nursery children's records are updated infrequently, on a termly basis, to generate new targets. This occurs half-termly in the Reception Year and informs medium-term planning more precisely. In both settings evidence gathered about children's achievement is not systematic. Sometimes it is undated, and adults erratically annotate pieces of work. In too many cases, predominantly in the Nursery, children do not complete the worksheets provided for them properly, scribbling mindlessly over the tasks and confirming the poor match between what they do and their stage of development.
- Most children settle quickly into the school's routines. For those who find this more difficult, each key worker provides caring support. Adults are good role models for children, they help them to solve any minor disagreements, to listen to each other and to share resources kindly. Children's personal and social development is supported effectively.
- Parents contribute to baseline information about their children and they appreciate daily verbal communication about their child's well-being. Some contribute to the termly target-setting meetings.

School details

Unique reference number	132110
Inspection number	10007903
DfE registration number	209/6362

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Christian
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Number of part time pupils	10
Proprietor	Mr and Mrs Oludimu
Chair	Mr Burford
Headteacher	Mrs Seun Adebayo
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,000
Telephone number	0208 291 4433
Website	www.springfieldsch.co.uk
Email address	admin@springfieldsch.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 June 2009

Information about this school

- The school aims to 'encourage the highest standards in academic and extra-curricular pursuits within a friendly and supportive community'. The central aim is to 'nurture children in the way of God'.
- The joint proprietors are husband and wife. They started Springfield Christian School in 1999. One proprietor worked full-time in the school, where she was called 'matron'. She had responsibility for the curriculum, teaching and learning and children's welfare. In September 2015 an internally promoted leader was appointed as headteacher to undertake these responsibilities.
- Since September 2015 the school ceased to provide education for Key Stage 2 pupils, due to the constraints of the school premises. There are now 37 children on roll. There is new provision for four babies which falls outside the remit of this inspection. There are 23 children aged between two and five in the early years, some of whom attend part time. Ten Key Stage 1 pupils are taught in a combined Year 1 and Year 2 class.
- At the time of the last inspection a governing body was in the process of being set up. Governors are currently in the process of restructuring.
- The school provides before-and after-school day care for children from 8am to 6pm.
- The school was last inspected by the Bridge Schools Inspectorate in June 2012.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning in seven lessons, including visits to the early years. Four of these visits were jointly undertaken with a senior leader. A tour of the premises was undertaken with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at children's work and spoke to them about it. She listened to children read. Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders and a group of children. A phone call was made to the chair of governors.
- The inspector analysed documentation. This included the school's policies, safeguarding information, records about how the school keeps children safe, staff recruitment information, school improvement plans and evidence about children's learning and their behaviour.
- It was not possible to contact the proprietors as part of this inspection. Additionally, some documents were unavailable, for example, records of governing body meetings, performance management information, records of how the proprietor assesses teaching and learning, and some financial information.
- There were insufficient responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The inspector spoke informally to some parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Ann Debono, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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