

Springcroft Primary School

Grindley Lane, Blythe Bridge, Stoke-on-Trent ST11 9JS

Inspection dates	14–15 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- In 2015, achievement was well above the national average for all pupils including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability.
- Leaders have acted quickly to identify and address any gaps in the skills and knowledge required by the new curriculum. As a result, the school's assessment information indicates that pupils are making good progress in nearly all subjects and year groups.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school, including in the early years. Teachers know their pupils well and plan lessons that are interesting and engage pupils in their learning.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and highly skilled. As a result, they make a significant contribution to pupils' progress.
- Leaders and governors have established a shared culture of high expectations, respect and tolerance. Consequently, pupils and staff thrive.
- Leaders and governors have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's performance. They are active in planning for improvement and carefully check how well they are doing.
- The role of subject leaders has been developed and refined. They now take a significant role in monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their areas of responsibility.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school because all staff have high expectations and apply them consistently.
- Pupils' personal development, welfare and safety is a fundamental part of what they learn. Pupils feel safe and are safe.
- The early years provision is good. Children are well supported to develop their skills and understanding of the world around them.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most able pupils are not challenged to full effect in mathematics.
- There is not yet a clear understanding across all stakeholders of what constitutes bullying and what is a disagreement.
- The school's policy for marking in mathematics does not help pupils to make rapid progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that a greater number of current pupils are making accelerated progress, particularly in mathematics, by ensuring that the most able pupils are challenged consistently and moved on swiftly when they show they are ready.
- Further improve the impact of leadership and management by ensuring that the marking policy for mathematics provides teachers with clear guidance about the frequency and quality of written feedback for pupils.
- Further improve pupils' personal development and welfare by ensuring that there is a clear and common understanding among pupils, parents and the school of what constitutes bullying and what is a disagreement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have successfully created a culture of high aspiration which is shared by all staff and pupils. The vision for every child to succeed is well established. It is demonstrated by the commitment of all staff to ensuring that barriers to learning are addressed so that pupils can achieve their full potential.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have developed a rigorous system for checking the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, leaders are very quickly able to identify where a pupil is not making the progress they should and to provide additional help where necessary. Consequently, rates of progress have improved significantly.
- Subject leaders now play an integral part in checking standards within their areas of responsibility. Training provided to help them develop the required skills has been effective and they have a clear understanding of their roles. Systems to check on the effectiveness of their work are now being refined.
- There is an effective programme of training and professional development which teachers and teaching assistants value because it helps them to contribute to whole-school priorities as well as meeting their individual targets for development. There has been a clear impact on improving teaching as a result of the training programme.
- The school has redesigned the curriculum to ensure that it meets the new national requirements and the needs and interests of pupils. There is a broad and balanced range of subjects, delivered through themes, which are carefully planned across all year groups to offer progression and ensure that age-related expectations are met. A new assessment system has been implemented this academic year to ensure that the school is able to track pupils' progress and attainment. Leaders are monitoring this very carefully so that any improvements required can be identified quickly and addressed.
- There is a wide range of additional activities available to pupils. These include a thriving breakfast club, and clubs for football, netball and tennis, art and science. There is also a multi-skills club for early years children and a key stage 1 choir. Currently, at lunchtimes, pupils are also able to join a newspaper club or belong to a ukulele orchestra. In addition, the school offers an extensive educational visit programme that supports learning in the curriculum as well as personal development and well-being.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a central part of school life at Springcroft. Leaders recognise that in a school with little cultural diversity, there is a need to ensure that pupils develop an understanding of the wider multicultural society within which they live. Consequently, British values are actively promoted through a wide range of activities, including visits to different religious and cultural institutions, and visitors to school and assemblies, as well as through the subject curriculum. Each class records their activities in their 'British values' books and teachers use these to remind pupils of what they have learned and experienced about cultures and beliefs. As a result, pupils can discuss their understanding of British values and demonstrate respect and tolerance in their own behaviour.
- The school promotes equality effectively. Pupils are very clear that discrimination is not tolerated by teachers or leaders.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively. This is reflected in the above-average achievement of disadvantaged pupils in 2015 and the indications of similar achievement for current pupils this year.
- The sport premium funding has been used to extend the range of sporting opportunities available to pupils. The school has joined with other local primary schools to employ sports coaches, who deliver a range of additional activities as well as training teachers to improve their own skills in delivering physical education lessons. This year, all pupils have taken part in at least one additional sporting activity.
- The early years is led well. Children are well supported to develop skills and understanding across all areas of learning.
- The school's marking policy is implemented by all teachers. However, teachers are having difficulty in applying the policy as successfully in mathematics as they do in other subjects. This is because expectations are not clear enough about what should be marked, when and how, in this subject.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance has improved significantly since the last inspection. Roles, responsibilities and committees have been restructured to reflect the priorities of the school. An audit of skills has ensured that new governors are actively recruited for the skills and experience they bring.
 - Training for all governors has been successful in ensuring that they have a good understanding of a range of information, so that challenge and support is provided for school leaders in appropriate measure. They actively seek improvement, commissioning external reviews to check the quality of provision. Governors have a good understanding of the school's performance and the quality of teaching and learning. They ensure that pay progression is linked to the national teachers' standards

and know precisely how additional funding is spent and the impact it has had on improving outcomes for pupils.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and governors ensure that all policies and procedures are in place and check that these are implemented fully and effectively. All staff know what to do if they have a concern and records show that even minor issues are followed up rigorously.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is consistently good over time across all age groups and subjects, including in the early years, and some is outstanding. This is because teachers know their pupils very well and skilful teaching assistants are employed effectively to support those pupils who are experiencing barriers to learning. Assessment information is used well to plan interesting and engaging lessons that enthuse pupils.
- Questioning is used effectively by teachers and teaching assistants to check how well pupils are learning, to quickly identify any misconceptions and to encourage them to express and develop their ideas. For instance, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils were encouraged to explain how they had arrived at an answer and why they chose a particular approach.
- All teachers have good subject knowledge and often use this to inspire pupils to find out more about a subject. For instance in a Year 4 art lesson, after making Egyptian artefacts, pupils were encouraged to research independently to find typical designs which they could adapt and use to decorate their jars. This led to pupils planning for the use of hieroglyphs in their own work.
- There is a strong focus on literacy across all subjects that is well supported by teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, pupils develop a good command of subject-specific and technical language.
- Pupils' work shows that the most able are not consistently pushed to do as well as they can. For example in mathematics too many continue with work they can already do.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff work together effectively to ensure that pupils are actively supported to get along with others, demonstrate respect and tolerance and understand how to make the most of their opportunities.
- Pupils value their school and their teachers. They arrive at school punctually and are eager to contribute to their own learning. They are proud of their school, their work and their achievements, which they are eager to share with visitors.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including on the internet. They can explain what risks they may face and what they should do if they occur. They explained to inspectors that safety is a regular feature of assemblies and information technology lessons, and is often dealt with through curriculum themes, such as the Year 1 theme of 'Who can help me?' The school has a 'Listening Ear' scheme through which pupils can raise any worries or upsets. Pupils can then talk about these with the school's counsellor.
- The school has no recorded incidents of bullying this year. The vast majority of pupils say that bullying is rare and when it does happen it is very quickly dealt with. However, a very small number of pupils and parents do not agree because there is not a common understanding of what constitutes bullying and what might be more accurately described as a disagreement.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good because all staff have high expectations and reinforce them at all times of the school day. The very few pupils who find it more difficult to meet the school's high expectations are supported effectively. As a result lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour and other pupils understand that when this does happen, it is not a behaviour to emulate.
- Pupils play together happily at break and lunchtimes. They demonstrate respect and tolerance for each other from an early age. Inspectors noted examples of very young children helping one another, for instance when a child fell over or when another became upset about losing her new hairband. As a result the school is a calm, orderly and harmonious environment.
- Attendance is well above the national average for all pupils and groups of pupils. Exclusions are very low because leaders deal with problems quickly to ensure they do not escalate.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics has risen steadily since 2013, and in 2015 was well above the national average. The school's new assessment system indicates that good rates of progress have been sustained in nearly all subjects and year groups for all pupils. Although this is not directly comparable with previous years, evidence in pupils' books supports the school's assessment.
- The school has a very small number of disadvantaged pupils in each year. However, in 2015, these pupils did at least as well as other pupils in the school and better than all pupils nationally. This year, leaders identified that although disadvantaged pupils are making progress in line with last year's national average for all pupils, in Years 5 and 6 they were lagging behind other pupils in the school for mathematics. Evidence indicates that additional support provided to address this is having a positive impact on rapidly closing the gap.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress from their starting points because their needs are rapidly identified and addressed appropriately. The school's practice of monitoring those pupils at risk of underachieving or for whom they have a concern, has paid dividends in further reducing gaps between these pupils and others in the school.
- Last year the most able pupils made accelerated progress in writing but did less well in reading. This year, tracking suggests that more of the most able pupils will make accelerated progress in this subject as a result of daily guided reading sessions and use of reading journals to encourage extended reading and reading for enjoyment.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years classroom and outdoor space form a stimulating environment, rich in literacy and numeracy resources and in displays of children's work to celebrate their achievements. Good organisation of different types of activity enables children to access a wide range of learning opportunities independently.
- The quality of teaching over time in the early years is good. Assessment is used very effectively to inform planning so that children benefit from a range of activities that interest and engage them in their learning and incorporate the right level of challenge. As a result, the majority of children achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception and, this year, the gap between boys and girls has been significantly reduced. Consequently, children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Phonics is taught effectively and on a daily basis. Records show that children are making good progress in this area.
- Behaviour is almost always good. This is because all adults reinforce high expectations on a daily basis and help children to understand and develop good learning behaviour, including turn taking and listening to each other. As a result children play and learn happily together, showing respect for each other and staff.
- All early years safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. Staff are vigilant and ensure that they communicate regularly with parents so that any problems can be addressed quickly. As a result, children are safe and feel secure.
- The early years leader has an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development and is active in planning for further improvement. She ensures that children's needs are met and that parents and carers are able to contribute to their children's learning.

School details

Unique reference number	124163
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10009265

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Jeffries
Headteacher	Helen Lewis
Telephone number	01782 394 793
Website	www.springcroft.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	office@springcroft.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 March 2014

Information about this school

- Springcroft is smaller than the average primary school. Since the last inspection the leadership team has been restructured and a new deputy headteacher post established.
- Nearly all pupils are of White British origin.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made observations in 17 lessons or parts of lessons. Two of these were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also visited registration time and assemblies and observed behaviour around the school at different times of the day, including breaks and lunchtimes.
- During visits to lessons, inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke to them about their learning.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of school documentation including pupils' assessment information, the school's development plan and self-evaluation, policies, documentary evidence of safeguarding, case studies, external reviews and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, class teachers and subject leaders, groups of pupils, parents, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 39 responses to Parent View, the online parent questionnaire, as well as the school's own records of parent views. Two parents also wrote to inspectors to express their appreciation of the school's work. Inspectors also took account of 21 staff questionnaires and information the school had collected about pupils' views.

Inspection team

Mel Ford, lead inspector

Gareth Morgan

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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