

Spring Lane Primary School

Spring Lane, Northampton NN1 2JW

Inspection dates	28–29 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

- This is a good school that is improving rapidly because of increasingly strong leadership and management.
- The headteacher has formed a team of senior and middle managers, who, along with the governing body, are committed to school improvement at all levels. There is a clear focus on raising pupils' attainment and progress by improving the quality of teaching.
- Achievement is good. Most pupils make good or better progress. Performance information shows that pupils' progress, across the school, has been accelerated over the last year.
- Parents and carers are generally supportive of all the school does to support their children.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a good start and achieve well. The proportion that achieve a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is rising.
- Behaviour is good as pupils move around the school. In classes, pupils are polite, friendly and well-mannered and lessons are rarely disrupted by behaviour that is less than good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. There are few incidents of poor behaviour, and pupils say that if incidents occur, adults quickly sort them out.
- The strong curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils quickly embrace equality and diversity. They work and play happily alongside others from many different backgrounds and cultures.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In key stages 1 and 2, the most able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. This restricts them deepening their understanding and reaching higher levels.
- Although teachers' marking is generally supportive, the school policy in this regard is not consistently applied by teachers. The impact of the policy on improving outcomes is inconsistent.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that in every class the most able pupils are given opportunities that challenge and deepen their thinking.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that the school's marking policy is implemented consistently by teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and senior leaders are ambitious and have high expectations of all pupils. This has resulted in the school making rapid improvement since the previous inspection, in improving teaching and learning and the use of performance information. Although most teachers and leaders have been recently appointed, senior leaders have developed a system which tracks individual pupils' and groups' progress. Leaders and teachers regularly discuss the progress pupils make and so develop a clear understanding of pupils' progress.
- Middle leaders are effective in their roles and are developing their leadership skills further. All are beginning to analyse performance data to identify priorities and monitor teaching and learning in their specialist subjects.
- Senior leaders have identified that not all most-able pupils are sufficiently challenged and are aware that this has not been appropriately addressed.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school's policy on marking is implemented consistently. Teachers' marking is generally supportive. However, pupils' books show that teachers do not always follow the school's marking policy. As a result, pupils do not consistently address the improvement points identified and the impact of the school's policy on outcomes is variable.
- Senior and middle leaders have created a culture of high expectations and staff morale is high. Parents are pleased with the provision their children receive. Self-evaluation is accurate. Middle leaders' action plans link into the school development plan and school development planning is reviewed each half term. Everyone is involved in its process.
- The system for performance management is well established and teachers now have realistic targets to work to, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Professional development for teachers is strong and all have many opportunities to develop their expertise. During discussions, the newly qualified teachers stated that they had been well supported.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is used to buy into the sports partnership and teachers and pupils benefit from the specialist teachers employed by the school. Teachers are more skilled and many pupils are fitter and healthier as a result.
- Where appropriate, pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding, along with their peers, are often grouped in smaller classes and receive additional support, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. These strategies contribute to the good progress these pupils make.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils say they like the many subjects that are offered and the variety of opportunities they take part in, such as visits out and residential trips. Extra-curricular activities include sporting activities, art, homework clubs and 'Fab Friday', which provides opportunities for pupils to access activities such as hair art, playing chess and learning a language.
- The curriculum prepares pupils well for their life in modern Britain. They learn about British values and have good opportunities to learn about issues such as democracy. For example, they learned about the European Union referendum and debated whether they would have voted 'in' or 'out'. They also learn about the rule of law when visitors, such as the police, come in and talk with them. All pupils learn that it is important to respect the views of others. As a result, pupils from many different faiths and beliefs all get along well together, as they play and learn. They understand the meaning of words such as tolerance, and know that everyone's opinion should be listened to and valued.
- The Collaborative Academies Trust has an accurate view of the school and recognises the key developments that have taken place since the appointment of the headteacher.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Since the previous inspection, an interim executive board was appointed in the place of the governing body to provide strategic leadership. Governors are now ambitious for the school and have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas of development. This means that they challenge the school when necessary. For example, they identified that school development planning was not rigorous or incisive and this has been rectified.
 - Governors have a clear understanding of all procedures and systems in school, for example relating to how teaching and learning is checked and the way teachers' performance is appraised. In addition, they understand how additional funding, such as the pupil premium and the sports premium, is used and how it has an impact on pupils' learning.
 - Governors are effective in fulfilling their range of statutory duties. They have a good understanding of their role and are further informed by senior leaders, who regularly report to them.

- New members of the governing body have a wide range of different skills and governors have a clear plan to move the school forward.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and teachers create a safe culture in the school, take appropriate actions to safeguard pupils and engage with parents and carers in this regard. Systems, procedures and policies meet statutory requirements. The safeguarding team are proactive in their drive to keep children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching has improved and is now good. Senior and middle leaders have been well focused on checking that pupils' strengths and needs are considered and that pupil groups learn well.
- All teachers are involved in the learning their pupils make. They look at pupils' performance information and are involved in regular discussion about individual pupils' learning in their classes. Activities are usually planned to match pupils' needs. However, not all teachers consistently adapt their teaching to help the most able pupils extend their learning.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge in English, mathematics and science, and develop warm relationships with pupils, who demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Teachers identify clear learning objectives and check learning towards these as lessons progress.
- Teachers give pupils many opportunities to write across the curriculum and have high expectations regarding the quality and presentation of writing. Consequently, most pupils are confident writers and many produce beautifully written pieces of work.
- The quality of teaching of reading has improved. By the time they start in Year 1, pupils have developed a good understanding of letters and sounds. As a result, the proportion of pupils who reached the standard expected, in the Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) screening check was similar to the national average in 2015. All pupils have good opportunities to read books that are graded at their individual levels. Consequently, few pupils have reading ages that are below their age-related level by the time they leave in Year 6.
- Similarly, in mathematics, pupils are given many opportunities to develop their understanding of number. They learn to record information in graphs and charts and develop their understanding of measurement, time and money as they move through the school.
- Parents have regular opportunities to speak with teachers about what their children need to do to improve. A recent school survey of parents' opinions showed that parents think that their children are taught well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and articulate and say that they have confidence in their teachers, feel safe and would speak with an adult if they have a problem. All pupils spoken to said that adults quickly sort out any issues they may have.
- The school is an orderly environment. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is improving and is around the national average. Pupils say that they really like to receive the certificates for 100% attendance.
- The personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme is tailored to the needs of the school community and is timetabled each week. It is thoroughly planned, is of high quality, highly relevant and addresses British values and current affairs, such as the European Union referendum. All staff are well equipped to deliver the PSHCE curriculum because they are suitably trained and supported by middle and senior leaders.
- Pupils respond positively to responsibility. They spoke of the school council introducing a new recycling system and new bins in which to put their waste. Pupils learn to understand the importance of raising funds for others and spoke about their fundraising events for world charities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In and around school, pupils are cooperative, comfortable to ask for help, polite and helpful to others. Pupils from many different cultures get on well with each other as they play and learn.
- Pupils say that they enjoy being outside because there is lots to do. Adults supervise many physical

activities and pupils look after their pets: rabbits, chickens and guinea pigs.

- Incidents of poor behaviour, including racism and bullying, are logged and responded to consistently and swiftly. There have been no exclusions in the last two years. Very occasionally, low-level disruption slows down learning in one or two classes.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Published performance information over the last two years shows that attainment in Year 2 is below the national average. At the end of Year 6, pupils' performance data for the last two years shows an improving picture. In 2014/15, attainment was average in Year 6. Progress in key stage 2 improved and was good in reading and writing, and average in mathematics.
- The most recent performance information shows that the current Year 2 have made good progress as they moved through key stage 1. The attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and those nationally is narrowing in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In key stage 2, the attainment gap is closing between disadvantaged pupils and those nationally in reading and mathematics, but less so in writing. Inspection evidence confirms that currently progress throughout the school is improving and is generally good in mathematics, reading and writing.
- The needs of pupils who need to catch up because of previous underachievement are being addressed well and their progress is being accelerated as a result. In many classes, these pupils are taught in smaller groups, which enables them to receive more individual adult support.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress because their needs are focused on well during lessons and their progress is carefully checked.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because teachers are aware of their capabilities and they are well supported as they learn.
- Pupils who are in the early stages of learning English make good progress because there is specific targeted support to help them quickly acquire sufficient language in order to access the curriculum.
- The most able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Leaders' and teachers' understandable priority has been to address urgently the historical legacy of the underachievement and to focus heavily on raising the attainment and accelerating the progress of the lower- and middle-ability pupils. As a result, less attention has been focused on the needs of the most able pupils.

Early years provision

good

- The early years provision is well led and managed because leaders, in both the Nursery and Reception classes, have a clear understanding of how young children learn. Teaching is good because staff work effectively together and children's strengths and specific needs are focused on well.
- In 2014/15, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development, in the Reception class, was similar to the national average. This was an improvement on previous years. In the last two years, children have made good progress, in all areas of learning, in relation to their low starting points.
- In the Nursery and Reception, areas are attractive, stimulating and well focused on learning through play. Effectively planned activities in both indoor and outdoor areas suit children's ages and stages across all areas of learning. Children were observed cooperatively working with others or choosing to play alone. They interact well with each other and confidently choose activities for themselves or share resources amicably. At the end of the session, Reception children were seen working well together as they tidied up.
- Different groups of children are suitably planned for and make good progress. One or two of the most able children have been identified and are suitably supported. Children with special educational needs are well known by the adults and receive effective support to enable them to learn well. Children who are at an early stage of acquiring English are supported effectively to develop language quickly.
- Children in the Nursery demonstrated good independence as they used glue sticks, paint and glitter to make bunting for the Muslim festival of Eid. Such activities enable them from an early age to learn about world celebrations. In the Reception class, children made good gains in their learning as they worked in small groups and focused on letters and sounds. Children were well supported by adults, who demonstrated a good understanding of the development of early reading and writing skills.
- All adults in the early years have high expectations regarding the behaviour of children. As a result, behaviour is at least good. Children quickly understand the difference between indoors and outdoors behaviour. Children are taught about keeping safe. For example, they know that to run inside is not safe

and know how to play safely when using the climbing frame. Children spoke of the importance of washing their hands clean to get rid of any germs before having their lunch. Safeguarding arrangements are secure.

- Secure transition procedures allow children to settle quickly into the early years, and for parents to be well informed of what is expected of them when they come into school or are visited at home.
- 'Busy books', in the Reception class, show the good progress children make across all areas of learning. Examples of developing writing skills were clearly evident as the most able have begun to write sentences, and lower-attaining children have started writing letters with a model to follow.
- Provision is good and children in the early years are well prepared for learning in Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	138493
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10011756

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	489
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clive Ireson
Headteacher	Alex Owens
Telephone number	01604 639114
Website	www.springlaneprimaryschool.com
Email address	head@springlane.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 June 2014

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Just under half the pupils come from either White British backgrounds or Other White backgrounds. The remainder originate from a range of different ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- A larger than average proportion of pupils are in the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those who are eligible for the pupil premium, which is the additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after, is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- There have been many staff changes since the previous inspection, including a new headteacher.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 24 parts of lessons taught by 14 teachers. One of the assistant headteachers took part in some observations with the lead inspector.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the four assistant headteachers, the middle managers, governors, pupils and a member of the Collaborative Academies Trust.
- The inspectors looked at many documents, including the school development plan, a self-evaluation document, safeguarding documents, pupils' previous and current work from Years 1 to 6, and a sample of Reception children's learning journeys.
- There were too few responses to analyse on Parent View, the Ofsted online survey. Inspectors analysed the 98 responses to the questionnaires the school sent out to parents three months ago.

Inspection team

Nina Bee, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gillian Weston	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Wilson	Ofsted Inspector

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