

Springfield Lower School

Orchard Street, Kempston, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 7LJ

Inspection dates

8–9 November 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Changes in leadership and teaching staff have hindered the speed with which leaders could achieve the necessary improvements since the previous inspection. New leaders have the capacity to continue to improve the school and have made a good start in the journey.
- In 2016 pupils did not meet the expected levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1.
- The school has not done enough to ensure that all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make as much progress as they can.
- For the last three years, pupils have not achieved well in phonics at the end of Year 1 and Year 2. Although this is improving, phonics achievement is not yet consistently good across the school.
- Improvement planning at all levels does not yet focus sufficiently on ensuring that pupils make the best progress they can from their varying starting points.
- Teaching is too inconsistent. Teachers sometimes do not move pupils' learning on soon enough. Pupils do not have enough information about how to improve their work.
- Governors, in the past, have not checked regularly on the use of pupil premium funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make the best progress they can.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of presentation of pupils' work. Some pupils do not take pride in the work they produce.

The school has the following strengths

- The school excels in its efforts to support vulnerable pupils and families and those who are in the early stages of learning English. This has a positive impact on pupils' good attendance and pupils' well-being.
- Good teaching, learning and assessment in the early years enable the majority of children to make good progress from their low starting points.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leadership and management by ensuring:
 - that improvement planning focuses clearly on ensuring that pupils make good progress
 - leaders regularly review the impact of the actions they take to improve pupils' progress
 - governors monitor closely the impact of pupil premium funding to improve the progress made by disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to accelerate learning and raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics by making sure that:
 - teachers give precise information to pupils to ensure that they know what they need to do to improve their work
 - teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to practise their skills in English and mathematics so that the identified gaps in their learning are quickly addressed
 - inconsistencies in the teaching of phonics and grammar, punctuation and spelling are eliminated so that pupils achieve as well as their peers nationally
 - adults' expectations of the presentation of pupils' work are consistently high.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The recently formed governing body and the newly appointed leaders demonstrate capacity to improve the school and have made many improvements since the previous inspection. However, they have not had sufficient time to ensure that pupils in all classes achieve equally well.
- The school's arrangements for monitoring the progress of all groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not yet rigorous enough. As a result, many pupils do not make the good progress they should.
- Leaders have been effective in establishing a motivated and committed team that is determined to rapidly improve the school. The school development plan for the current year clearly identifies actions to address areas that need improvement. However, actions do not sharply focus on the progress of pupils.
- In the past, the pupil premium funding has not been used well enough to diminish the difference in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally.
- The local authority provides training and mentoring, and continues to undertake further work to strengthen the leadership team. Middle leaders embrace this professional development and are quick to put into practice their new skills. Consequently, some teachers are using assessment information far more accurately to help plan learning activities that focus on the needs of pupils.
- Leaders acknowledge that inconsistencies in the quality of teaching over time remain. A programme of teacher support and the sharing of best practice is in place. This is beginning to make a difference to the amount of progress that pupils make, for example in mathematics. The resulting activities are well planned to support pupils' next steps in learning so that they do well.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well. Through an exciting curriculum, adults develop pupils' sense of enjoyment in learning about the world, themselves and others. Pupils are keen and confident to speak in different languages, for example Mandarin and Italian.
- Leaders demonstrate a commitment to the wider community. Chinese language assistants are employed, through the British Council, to work in the school. They bring a range of cultural experiences and expertise which enhance pupils' learning by giving pupils the opportunity to develop an understanding of different cultures.
- Pupils and staff benefit from the careful use of the physical education (PE) and sports premium funding. Physical education is taught well by an external coach and teachers' skills are enhanced by working alongside him. As a result, the quality of the teaching of PE is improving.
- The British values of tolerance and respect for others are promoted well through a well-planned programme of assemblies and through the school's core values. Pupils happily talk about the school's key values: respect, cooperation, appreciation, happiness, honesty, thoughtfulness, understanding, responsibility, trust, courage, love, friendship, caring and patience. Pupils take ownership of the school's core values.

These are displayed around the school and linked successfully to the behaviour policy.

Governance of the school

- Governors continue to develop their skills following an external review recommended at the previous inspection. They now have a greater understanding of their role in moving the school forward.
- Governors are highly committed to the school's success. They have an accurate view of the school's performance and a clear picture for the improvements needed over the next year. The school development plan details clear priorities to improve pupils' outcomes, but does not focus well enough on pupils making the best progress they can.
- The governing body has been strategic in its recruitment of new members. Governors have actively sought experience to develop safeguarding expertise and have ensured that they have the appropriate financial management skills. A financial audit undertaken in 2016 acknowledges that the school's financial management has 'significantly improved'.
- Governors now challenge leaders on how pupil premium funding is spent to determine how well this money is helping disadvantaged pupils to achieve the best they can. Governors visit the school regularly to check that the information that leaders provide them with is well evidenced. The impact of the use of the pupil premium funding is not sufficiently detailed on the school's website.
- Governors are supported by the local authority to further develop their role in monitoring the effectiveness of the school's work. Consequently, the governing body continually strengthens its capacity to improve.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders carry out appropriate checks on each member of staff to ensure their suitability to work with children.
- Since the previous inspection, playtimes and lunchtimes have been rearranged, which has had a positive impact on safety in the playground. Because this strategy is doubling the ratio of lunchtime staff to pupils, staff monitor safety effectively and pupils say that they feel safe. Clear, established routines ensure that pupils enter the school calmly.
- All staff receive regular training in all aspects of safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty. Staff know how to raise any concerns they have about pupils.
- All new staff are equipped to identify pupils who are potentially vulnerable. As a result, action to intervene is taken quickly where necessary and pupils are well cared for.
- Leaders monitor attendance closely. They take rapid action when concerns arise. Through their actions, leaders ensure that attendance issues are dealt with robustly. As a result, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- Leaders undertake rigorous analysis of the information from the school's electronic system, which records incidents of inappropriate behaviour. As a result, effective action is taken quickly when common patterns of poor behaviour occur.

- The school's safeguarding lead has developed strong relationships with outside agencies and seeks help to promptly address any concerns that arise for vulnerable pupils or families.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across the school. Some teachers regularly check on how well pupils are doing in their work and ensure that misconceptions are addressed quickly. When this happens, pupils make good progress. However, this is not consistent throughout the school so not enough pupils make good progress.
- Although improvements in reading can be seen for current Year 1 pupils, the consistent approach to the teaching of phonics, being practised in the early years, has not yet been disseminated across the whole school. Consequently, pupils' achievement in reading by the end of Year 2 has been below the national average.
- Pupils in some Year 3 and Year 4 classes make good progress in writing. However, in other classes, work is not sufficiently challenging to ensure that pupils remain on task and make good progress.
- The teaching of mathematics is inconsistent across both key stages. There are too many gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills that have not yet been adequately addressed. However, where teaching is carefully planned and focuses on the needs of pupils, progress is good for all groups, including disadvantaged pupils.
- Teachers' expectations of the presentation of pupils' work are not high enough.
- Sometimes the most able pupils find the work too easy, so they do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The majority of teachers adhere to the school's marking and feedback policy. Teachers' feedback is still not precise enough to ensure that pupils know how to improve their work. As a result, pupils do not move on as quickly as they could and fail to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers plan well for pupils who join the school speaking English as an additional language. Pupils are well inducted into class and teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support. As a result, pupils settle quickly and make rapid progress.
- Some teachers in key stages 1 and 2 demonstrate good subject knowledge when teaching grammar, punctuation and spelling. In these classes, pupils make better progress. However, the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling is not good enough in all classes.
- Some teaching assistants work well to support groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by focusing on the specific targets set for individual pupils. The pupils are beginning to make good progress from their individual starting points.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Parents' responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, state that their children are happy at school. Pupils who responded to the online survey also confirm that they enjoy school.
- The school's playground friends, prefects and reading ambassadors help develop responsibility in older pupils by embedding the school's behaviour policy of 'high expectations modelled by all'.
- Pupils know who to speak to if they have concerns. They are very confident that staff will deal with any issues that arise.
- Pupils can talk about how to keep themselves safe on the internet. Each class has an internet safety booklet that pupils are keen to complete with their peers.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning. During the inspection, pupils showed a particular interest in learning about the Egyptians and were keen to show inspectors their work.
- The role of the new behaviour welfare teaching assistant helps pupils to be ready to learn. Activities are set up and supervised at lunchtime for small groups of pupils who sometimes struggle with unstructured play. This results in smooth transition from lunchtime play to classroom learning.
- The school provides effective pastoral support for vulnerable pupils and their families. The pastoral support team is proactive and works closely with the local authority's early help unit to ensure that families receive the support they need.
- Leaders celebrate pupils' achievements in assemblies through the award of certificates. The pupils respond well to this approach because it helps build their self-esteem and confidence.
- Pupils have positive relationships with adults and each other. Pupils say they feel well cared for. Inspectors agree that this is reflected in discussions with pupils.

Behaviour

- Behaviour is good. Pupils display good manners and are respectful towards adults and visitors. They hold doors open for adults and each other and move around the school sensibly and safely.
- Breaktimes are organised well. There is a dedicated all-year-round football pitch, organised skipping and activities. Playground leaders promote and encourage pupils' positive behaviour.
- Parents and pupils like the reward system. Parents are informed immediately when pupils are rewarded. One parent commented, 'The reward system and incentives are fantastic and my daughter loves telling me about her day and if she has received any rewards.'

- Attendance is above the national average for vulnerable groups. Attendance concerns are raised quickly with parents. Staff intervention is notably successful at improving individual pupils' attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Results of the Year 1 phonics screening check have been below the national average for the last three years. Current school assessment information and inspection evidence indicate that phonics provision is improving.
- At the end of key stage 1 in 2016, the proportion of pupils in Year 2 reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was below the proportion nationally for all pupils.
- The most able pupils do not reach the standards of which they are capable because work is not always matched well enough to their needs. This is especially the case in mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities currently in the school are well supported by teaching assistants. However, the monitoring of their progress by leaders is not as sharp as it could be. Consequently, the pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- Evidence of good progress can be seen in some pupils' work. It is also evident that pupils' progress and attainment varies across the school, in different age groups, classes and subjects. Pupils' work, as well as leaders' monitoring, reflects this picture.
- In 2015 and 2016, disadvantaged pupils did not make rapid enough progress to catch up with the standards achieved by their peers. As a result, fewer disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standards than their peers nationally.
- Pupils enjoy reading; however, some books are not always matched well enough to pupils' ability. This means that pupils are not supported to make as much progress as they could.
- Early years provision is good and current children are making good progress, particularly in phonics. Children are well prepared for the Year 1 curriculum.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter Reception from a number of different nurseries. The school's nursery liaison assistant visits all children due to start at the school, ensuring that transition into school is smooth. As a result, children settle well and are happy.
- Responses to Parent View from parents with children in Reception were extremely complimentary about the good start their children have made this term. One parent commented, 'my daughter has had a fabulous start to school.'
- The well-organised classrooms invite children to learn. Good-quality resources are readily available for them to use. Children select activities independently and confidently move between activities.

- Children regularly use prompts on display to support their learning. For example, before children started an activity about the current topic 'where we live', they knew to look at the classroom display showing different types of houses to guide them in their thinking.
- Provision in the early years is strong. As a result, children make good progress from their often low starting points. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development by the time they leave the Reception class is similar to the national average.
- Adults provide activities that are carefully thought out so that children can develop the skills they need. For example, in the puppet area, children act out and re-tell stories among themselves. This helps children develop their language and social skills because they have opportunities to interact with other children in a purposeful way.
- The leaders of the early years use assessment information well to plan activities that support different groups of children. For example, adults provide specific writing activities and support boys to develop their writing skills, which was highlighted from the assessments at the start of this academic year. As a result, boys are starting to make better progress in writing.
- Leaders have ensured consistency in the teaching of phonics and mathematics throughout the early years. This has led to children making good progress in these areas of learning.
- The effective safeguarding procedures implemented for the whole school include the early years. Routines are quickly established. They promote children's good behaviour and ensure that they are kept safe. Records of all incidents are logged and parents are kept well informed.
- Until this year, the school has not looked carefully enough at the achievement of different groups of children. The new leadership team now carefully plans to ensure that all individuals and groups of children make good or better progress. As a result, children are leaving the Reception class well prepared for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	109514
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10021795

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	344
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Darren Gibbons
Headteacher	Marianne Allen
Telephone number	01234 306000
Website	www.springfieldlower.org.uk
Email address	allenm@springfield.bbvle.com
Date of previous inspection	10–11 December 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about a strategy for the school's use of pupil premium funding, which includes the impact of the expenditure on eligible and other pupils, on its website.
- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, with the remainder coming from a range of minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much larger than that found nationally.
- In this school, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national

average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the proportion of pupils in the school with a statement of special educational need or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The early years foundation stage comprises three Reception classes.
- At key stages 1 and 2, pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes up to Year 4.
- The school works in partnership with nursery schools, other lower schools and middle schools.

Information about this inspection

- During this inspection, the inspection team visited all classrooms to see pupils learning and observed pupils at play. Some of the visits to classes were jointly seen with senior leaders. The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books, spoke to pupils about their learning and listened to some pupils read.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, teachers, non-teaching staff and governors. Inspectors also met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors considered the views of 17 parents who responded to the Parent View, the school's most recent questionnaire for parents, together with those of parents they met informally during the inspection.
- The inspectors considered the views of 28 members of staff and 21 pupils who responded to the online surveys.
- The inspectors evaluated a range of school documents and information. These included the school's development plan, checks on the quality of teaching, curriculum plans, incident logs, attendance records and the school's performance information.
- The inspectors looked at arrangements for and records of the procedures to safeguard pupils.

Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Philip Mann	Her Majesty's Inspector
Anne Fisher	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016