

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Kelly Head
Headteacher
Springfield Infant School and Nursery
11 Wesley Way
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP1 4PP

Dear Mrs Kelly Head

Short inspection of Springfield Infant School and Nursery

Following my visit to the school on 24 January 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education seen at the last inspection. You and your deputy headteacher form an effective team and work well together. Your skills complement one another. Staff and governors share your high expectations. Your 'can-do' attitude is infectious. Staff contribute fully and pupils develop resilience and try hard. The pride in their school is very real. Commitment is a trait common to staff and governors. Again, your leadership is evident in this. The keenness of staff to improve is as real as that of their pupils. The school's 'teacher toolkit' is a straightforward, no-nonsense, series of robust policies and procedures that form the foundation on which you build effective and consistent teaching and learning. Staff appreciate the clear, concise instructions. You very successfully seek out partnerships with other schools, to learn from the best.

Your clear and accurate understanding of the school's areas for development enables you to focus in the right places. The improvement plan identifies the most important priorities. However, some of the targets and timescales are imprecise, making it hard to see how staff know what to aim for, or how and when they will know it is achieved.

Pupils respond well to the way they are taught, as they did at the previous inspection. Learning is enjoyable and memorable. Topics bring learning alive and arouse pupils' curiosity to find things out.

Permeating everyday life and fundamental to the school's effectiveness is the

positive culture built on the 'Five Cs', based on community, care, challenge, creativity and commitment. The strong 'family feel' in the school community gives pupils confidence to have a go, knowing that staff and other pupils will encourage them. This supports their good progress. Challenge is embraced by pupils. One pupil told me, 'I like hard work, it helps me get better.' In lessons, pupils strive to improve their writing, for example replacing 'tired' with 'exhausted'. Teachers' high expectations are less evident in pupils' speaking and listening. Pupils are not routinely expected to answer in clear, well-constructed sentences. Pupils explained that mathematics is more interesting now because teachers give them opportunities to use what they know to figure things out and solve problems. We saw the positive impact on their understanding. When we looked at pupils' books, we agreed that pupils, including the most able, did not have similar opportunities in their writing across subjects. Pupils of all abilities are often given an identical sheet to record their response, restricting how they go about tasks.

School leaders have dealt successfully with the previous inspection's areas for improvement. The rate of pupils' progress in reading has increased. Middle leaders know the school's priorities well, play a full part in improvements and form an effective team. Local authority expertise helped staff clarify their roles. Pupils' attendance is broadly average for primary schools nationally and is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Governors' appropriate use of additional funding provides an extra member of staff to support and encourage parents to get their children to school. Although the family worker has made a significant difference to raising attendance, you acknowledge that more needs to be done. A small proportion of pupils miss roughly one in 10 days, which means that they do not get the full benefit of the good teaching and learning that the school provides.

Attainment and progress are good overall. Inspection evidence from lessons and pupils' books supports the school's current in-year information. This shows that the vast majority of pupils are on track to achieve at least the expected standard this year, with many likely to exceed it. These pupils include the most able disadvantaged pupils. Current pupils who speak English as an additional language thrive in the purposeful classrooms and also do well. Teachers make writing tasks interesting and lively. Pupils, especially boys, clearly like talking about characters' feelings and acting in role. More and more, the improvements translate into better writing. Last year, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 dipped, particularly in writing and mathematics. This was because these pupils' starting points were lower than in previous years. As a result, although they made similarly good progress to previous years, they did not reach the same standards overall.

Safeguarding is effective.

You give your role as designated safeguarding leader paramount importance. You, and the senior leaders supporting you, are fully trained so that you can help and advise staff. Governors regularly check that safeguarding arrangements are robust. All statutory checks of staff and everyone coming onto the school site are carried out thoroughly and recorded meticulously. No one works with pupils until all checks are complete and clear.

Staff are vigilant and fully understand their responsibilities to protect pupils.

Thorough training and regular updates mean that staff know what to look out for. A clear and robust procedure means that concerns are recorded and, if appropriate, reported to outside agencies. Concerns are fully and thoroughly addressed. Staff are suitably trained in first aid and paediatric first aid. Thorough risk assessments underpin activities such as the increasing number of educational visits.

Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for in school, and that they have adults to turn to if they are worried. In language that pupils understand, you and the staff have explained potential dangers, such as when online or on the road.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors clearly know and understand the school's many strengths and the areas for improvement. The governing body provides you with effective support and challenge. It ensures, for example through the employment of a family support worker, that use of additional funding is effective.
- Two of my key lines of enquiry were about writing and mathematics standards. Your data, our book scrutiny and visits to lessons clearly show that the vast majority of pupils are learning at the expected level, and a good proportion at greater depth. I also looked closely at pupils' progress, particularly those groups of pupils who had achieved less well than their peers in the 2016 national tests. Pupils' progress is good. The improvement is the result of several changes. You track pupils' progress closely and hold teachers to account if any fall behind. When they need support, pupils receive extra help straightaway and most catch up quickly. Pupils who begin with little or no English rapidly acquire the language. The strong focus on skills such as phonics promotes their learning particularly well. Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school do as well, or better than, their peers. In class, close attention is given to any gaps in their learning. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also do well, often from lower starting points. Provision is well led. Each pupil's needs are known and met well.
- Another line of enquiry was attendance. The vast majority of parents understand the importance of schooling. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. You have roughly halved the percentage of persistently absent disadvantaged pupils, but it remains a figure well above the national average.
- An important factor in the improving standards is the quality of teaching. You encourage teachers to be outward-looking, to work closely with other schools to the benefit of all. Teachers' collegial approach means that everyone uses policies consistently, which works well to make sure that pupils know what to expect, and what is expected of them. Teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants makes sure that the support is tailored so that gaps in pupils' learning are eradicated.
- Another improvement that impacts on standards is the revised curriculum which enthuses pupils and engenders a love of learning. English and mathematics teaching is much improved. In both, tasks interest pupils and make learning fun.
- Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of fundamental British values and a sense of responsibility, such as through the school council. Pupils say that they enjoy contributing and doing 'jobs'. Pupils' respect for different cultures, traditions and beliefs is strong. Learning about our diverse nation and world is

comprehensive and thorough. The recent visit to London gives pupils first-hand experience of a contrasting location.

- Additional funding for primary school physical education and sports is used appropriately. The all-weather spaces enable pupils to enjoy energetic activity outdoors all year round. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to work and play outdoors and say that it contributes to better behaviour at play and lunchtimes. You offer swimming lessons, correctly recognising that this is an important life skill.
- The school's website meets statutory requirements for published information.
- Nine in every 10 parents responding to Parent View would recommend the school to another parent. Parents spoken to commented on how well the school communicates with them.
- Effective online early years assessment enables parents to see their children's progress in 'real time'. Parents are increasingly involved in their children's education. They say that they like the information they are given at parents' evenings so they can help their children in ways more closely aligned to the school. This also contributes to parents' understanding of the value and importance of school, and the need for regular attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers set high expectations of pupils' speaking and listening skills
- written tasks across all subjects, particularly for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, give pupils sufficient opportunity to apply what they know
- persistent absenteeism for disadvantaged pupils continues to reduce
- the targets for improvement the school sets itself are clear so that staff and governors know precisely what is to be achieved, how and by when.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Robert Greatrex
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher. I held a meeting with your middle leaders who have responsibility for particular year groups, including Reception, to discuss progress and the impact of decisions that leaders have made. I met with a group of governors, a representative of the local authority, and a group of pupils selected by you.

I scrutinised a variety of sources of information including the school's assessment information, your school improvement plan, the 'teachers' toolkit' and your records of monitoring and evaluation. I also scrutinised the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures, the records of checks that staff make on the suitability of staff to work with children, and information relating to attendance. With yourself and/or your deputy headteacher, I visited most classes and observed learning, viewed work in pupils' books and spoke with pupils in lessons about their learning.

I spoke to some parents and took account of the 34 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. There were no responses from staff or pupils.

This short inspection focused on:

- whether standards, particularly in writing and mathematics, are high enough
- whether disadvantaged pupils do as well as they should, particularly in writing and mathematics
- whether pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress
- whether the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make good progress
- how well pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do
- how leaders, including middle leaders and governors, have an impact on driving improvement, and whether the action planning has sharp enough targets
- what the school is doing to improve attendance of persistent absentees
- whether safeguarding is still effective across the school, and that pupils are safe.

On 1 April 2017, the school will convert to an academy and join the Orwell Multi-Academy Trust with Halifax Primary School, Handford Hall Primary School and The Willows Primary School.