

Springfield Primary School

Forsythia Close, Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 6XW

Inspection dates

23–24 January 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement. Not enough Year 6 boys achieve the expected standard or make good progress from their starting points across a range of subjects.
- The quality of teaching and learning is too variable to secure consistently good outcomes across the school.
- A minority of pupils cause low-level disruption in some classes. Pupils become easily distracted from their learning and do not always complete the tasks set by their teachers.
- Expectations of what pupils should be able to do in some classes are sometimes too low.
- Historically, actions by governors did not ensure that the school provided a good standard of education for all pupils.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise their English and maths basic skills across the curriculum.
- The new subject leaders are not yet fulfilling their monitoring role effectively enough to have an impact on outcomes for pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has ambitious plans for improvement. Along with her senior leadership team, she has been resolute in tackling a difficult set of circumstances.
- The headteacher and her deputy have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and how to bring about the necessary improvements.
- The proportion of girls achieving the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 is above average in reading for 2017.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Pupils love to read and use their phonics skills well.
- The school's work to safeguard pupils is highly effective. All staff take responsibility for keeping pupils safe and work well with families.
- Pupils like coming to school and attend regularly. They enjoy their lessons and say that they feel safe in school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all groups of pupils make good progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers understand what they need to do to improve their practice so that all groups of pupils achieve and learn well
 - teachers plan and adapt the learning so that it meets the needs of all ability groups
 - pupils are provided with regular opportunities for cross-curricular links to develop their English and mathematic skills
 - teachers plan interesting activities that motivate pupils so that they stay on task during lessons
 - all teachers have the same high expectations of the way that pupils present their work.
- Improve the leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - middle leaders use assessment information effectively to pinpoint and tackle any variation in the progress being made by different groups of pupils
 - middle leaders have an increased understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the part they play in whole-school improvement
 - expertise is shared across the school to increase teachers' subject knowledge and skills
 - governors' knowledge and skills are further developed so that they are able to challenge leaders more effectively, particularly in relation to the progress of different groups of pupils.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher has been relentless in her pursuit of good teaching and is determined to create a school where the focus is on high-quality learning. She, with the support of the deputy headteacher, has taken decisive action where teaching is not good enough. However, these actions have not yet ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good and, as a consequence, pupils do not achieve as well as they should at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Senior leaders have accurately identified the school's key strengths and areas for improvement. For example, in response to boys' slow progress in reading in 2016, the school introduced a focus on reading throughout the school. Recent internal assessments demonstrated that this is beginning to have a positive impact.
- Much of the leadership of key subjects falls on the shoulders of the headteacher and deputy headteacher as new staff settle in. Leaders are aware that this is not sustainable. They have started develop the roles of middle leaders further. For example, the headteacher currently has a teacher shadowing her as coordinator of maths.
- The breakfast club and after-school club are very well run and ensure a great start and end to the school day. Leaders ensure that the most vulnerable families are well supported and encouraged to attend. Pupils leave the breakfast provision well prepared for the start of the school day and settle quickly into their classes. One parent commented that the 'School has excellent breakfast and after-school clubs that are essential for working parents.'
- Sports funding is used effectively. The funding has been spent on the membership of the local sports partnership. A specialist physical education coach teaches pupils in all year groups alongside their teachers so that the teachers strengthen their own practice in teaching a range of sports.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well within the school. Assemblies develop the school values and link these well to British values. Pupils are given opportunities to take on leadership roles and exercise democratic values through, for example, electing the school council and applying to be 'play pals'. The school provides a range of additional clubs which enhance pupils' social and cultural experiences. These include a wide range of sports, gardening, chess, games and drama. Pupils also benefit from cultural trips, such as to see the Essex Symphony Orchestra and the pantomime.
- Parents with whom inspectors spoke were mostly positive about the school. A number of parents took the time to complete Ofsted's online free-text survey. This showed that parents were frustrated with the staffing changes, but nevertheless supported the changes that have taken place. For example, one parent stated that the new headteacher 'appears to be steering the school in the right direction and is trying hard to raise standards'.
- The pupil premium grant for disadvantaged pupils is used appropriately. Each pupil is identified, their needs assessed and funds used to give additional support, as required, or assistance for educational visits and events.

Governance of the school

- Historically, governors have not been effective enough in holding leaders and teachers to account for any weaknesses in pupils' achievement. They have too readily accepted senior leaders' analysis of their performance, without checking for themselves.
- Since the previous inspection, the local authority has provided timely and effective support. The governors have worked closely with the local authority over the last year to gain a better understanding of the role they play in holding leaders to account. This is beginning to happen but is still at an early stage.
- In discussion with governors, it is clear that they have begun to develop an understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are being supported by the local authority and are now working more effectively with school leaders to ensure that the improvement made since the appointment of the current headteacher continues.
- Governors know how the pupil premium funding has been spent. They are that kept informed and have focused visits about the effectiveness of actions being taken to remove barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their children are safe and well looked after at this school.
- Leaders work closely with external agencies and the local authority to make sure that pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are safe and well cared for.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. They know which staff they can go to if they have any concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement because they are not yet consistently well matched to pupils' abilities. This results in variations in pupils' progress as they move through the school. Recent changes made by school leaders have resulted in improvement and pupils' progress is accelerating. However, teaching is not yet leading to consistently rapid progress for pupils to attain the standards expected for their age.
- Some teachers do not plan learning that excites pupils. Nor do they ensure that they consistently encourage good attitudes to learning. As a result, pupils lose interest, low-level disruption occurs and progress slows.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are using the school's assessment system to track carefully the progress of pupils termly from their individual starting points. Through this process, pupils who are not making sufficient progress are highlighted and provision put in place to meet their needs. Evidence shows that this is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress.

- The impact of leaders' decision to introduce phonics lessons has resulted in an increase in pupils' outcomes in Year 1. Phonics is now taught effectively in the early years and key stage 1. Pupils are beginning to use their knowledge of phonics to decode tricky words and to help them improve their spelling.
- Leaders have rightly made reading a priority. The impact of this was evident to the inspector who heard children read. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of the value of reading, and see reading as a valuable activity in its own right.
- Teachers do not sufficiently challenge pupils' poor handwriting and presentation in books. Through the headteacher's monitoring she has recognised that this area needs work, and as a result introduced handwriting lessons throughout the school.
- In some classes, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils in key stages 1 and 2 to practise the skills they have learned in reading, writing and mathematics across the range of subjects they are taught. Pupils' topic and science books show that teachers have given them few opportunities to deepen their learning through writing for extended periods or applying their mathematical skills.
- Additional adults are used well in some classes to support pupils' learning and use their knowledge of the pupils to support and intervene in a timely manner. However, in some year groups, teachers do not guide teaching assistants well enough about how they can ensure that pupils make the best progress that they can.
- Teachers adhere to the school's marking policy, which identifies what pupils should do to improve their work. Pupils explained to inspectors how this helps them to improve their work. They also explained that 'SOS' (Show Off Something) enables them to show the teacher what they have learned and they can see how they have improved over time.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- All the pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they liked coming to school, and that they felt safe. Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take. They say that it is rare, but if they ever have any concerns, there is always an adult on hand to discuss issues with them.
- Leaders and staff are working hard to develop the school values system. Many pupils are able to talk about the school values such as resilience and respect, for example one Year 6 pupil stated that, following their residential trip, 'we came back fonder of each other and respecting each other'. However, this does not always reflect the way they learn. For example, pupils do not always persevere with tasks in lessons, which results in some low-level disruption.
- Pupils told inspectors they are safe at school. They learn how to stay safe through personal, social and health education lessons and assemblies. They demonstrate a good understanding of internet safety.
- The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire or spoke with

the inspectors say that their children are happy to come to school and that they are well cared for and safe. One stated, 'My child is extremely happy at this school and seems to be doing well, which is a great reflection on how the school is doing.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils are polite and respectful of each other and adults. During the inspection pupils regularly spoke to inspectors and were keen to tell them about their school and the work they were doing.
- The majority of pupils behave very well. However, in some classes, teachers do not plan lessons effectively, or match activities to meet pupils' needs. As a result, pupils' attention dwindles. Adults in these classes do not always refocus pupils' attention quickly enough and, as a result, some low-level disruption occurs.
- Pupils respond well to routines such as lining up or going from their classroom to the hall. They follow instructions well and, where needed, respond quickly to adult correction.
- Attendance has improved and is now very close to average. The school takes swift action to address persistent absence through robust monitoring and clear policies. Parents understand the processes that are in place should persistent absence continue. Indications are that they are having an impact on the reduction in persistent absence in the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because, over time, not enough Year 6 pupils, particularly boys, make good progress from their starting points across a range of subjects, including mathematics. In key stage 1 in 2017, attainment was in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the proportion of key stage 1 pupils attaining a greater depth in writing and mathematics was below the national average.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is variable across the school. This is because of inconsistent teaching over time. The work in current pupils' books confirms this.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line the national average. However, this positive picture is due to girls' attainment being significantly higher than boys'. Although improving, the proportion of boys who achieve the required standard has been below the national average for the last three years.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics for the last two years was below average for boys and girls. The new headteacher has developed new initiatives to address this and support the teaching of mathematics. Workshops for parents have also been introduced, which have enabled parents to support their children at home; this has been welcomed by parents. As one said, 'Several workshops were held for parents to come along and learn what is being taught in the mathematics and English lessons, and how we can help our children at home, which I found really useful.'

- Observations of learning, reviews of pupils' books and the school's current assessment information indicate that pupils' progress is improving but remains variable across classes and year groups. Evidence also shows that the differences between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in school are diminishing.
- Pupils' learning in lessons and books seen during the inspection, as well as the school's own assessment information, show that pupils are now making better progress in mathematics.
- Progress in reading is improving. The new headteacher has introduced new reading initiatives, including phonic lessons in EYFS and key stage 1 and training to ensure that there is better teaching of reading, and this has resulted in the profile of reading being raised within the school.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is also varied across the school. The majority make the progress that is expected of them from their varying starting points, but few exceed this progress and therefore are not achieving as well as they might. In some classes, all groups of pupils progress well.
- The school has focused on gaining ground lost last in the last three years in reading, writing and mathematics, but the progress that pupils make in other subjects such as science and topic work remains weaker.

Early years provision

Good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have brought about rapid change in early years. Provision is now good. Children get off to a good start as they enter school.
- Children settle well because the Reception classes offer a safe, bright and stimulating place to learn. Children have good relationships with adults as well as with each other; routines and expectations are established from the start. Children cooperate well in pairs, take turns, listen carefully and follow instructions.
- Owing to effective teaching and learning and a well-resourced setting, by the end of Reception Year, children, including disadvantaged children, make good progress from their different starting points. Children are confident, independent learners who are well prepared to move into Year 1.
- The leadership in the early years has brought about a clear focus on improving the quality of learning for these young children. Adults make frequent checks on what the children can do and what they need to learn next. This is particularly evident in the activities which are provided for them to choose and practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills. Challenges are provided for children to solve problems, act out in various role-play areas, or construct something using a range of equipment.
- Staff interact with children well to stimulate their language and encourage them to extend their learning through skilful questioning and prompting.
- Relationships with parents and carers are strong. They are effective partners in contributing to their child's learning profile through an internet-based assessment tool where parents and teachers can share children's learning development. One parent stated that their child 'has really done well and is thriving, the online learning log is fantastic.'

- Effective arrangements for the children as they are admitted into the Reception class ensure their smooth transition into school.
- Behaviour in the early years is good. Children enjoy each other's company and are happy to take turns and share toys and resources.

School details

Unique reference number	134065
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10041804

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	431
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Mackrory
Headteacher	Jacquelyn Pick
Telephone number	01245 461077
Website	www.springfield-pri.essex.sch.uk
Email address	admin@springfield-pri.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 November 2013

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-size primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities with an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in each class. This included visits made jointly with the school leaders to observe the work of classes from the Reception to Year 6.
- Inspectors looked through a wide range of pupils' work across different subjects and heard pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally in groups and informally around school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the day and took into account the views of 157 parents who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, together with the 52 responses made on the free-text service.
- They observed pupils' behaviour at playtimes and lunchtimes, when pupils were moving in and around the school and during lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, the governors, senior leaders and middle leaders. The lead inspector held a meeting and also a telephone conversation with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and areas for development.
- Inspectors evaluated pupils' attendance and behaviour records, including records of bullying incidents.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding documentation and how this related to daily practice as well as speaking with staff and children.
- Inspectors took account of 42 responses to the staff survey and 59 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Susannah Connell, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lindsay Hanger	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Copping	Ofsted Inspector

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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.

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