

Inspection of a good school: Springfield Primary School

Barton Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG31 5NJ

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 October 2021

Outcome

Springfield Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at Springfield Primary and love coming to school. They enjoy the many extras the school has to offer, such as learning the recorder, the 'daily mile' and football clubs. Lessons interest pupils. For example, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 cannot wait for the upcoming trip to Upton Court so that they can learn more about the Second World War.

Pupils behave well. They care for each other and build strong friendships. Pupils feel safe in school. They can discuss the various forms that bullying may take. When pupils or parents report bullying, leaders investigate it thoroughly. Pupils have faith in staff to nip any concerns they have in the bud. As one pupil said, 'Teachers make sure we are OK.'

Despite the many issues that have come with having a recent, serious flood, leaders' high expectations have not wavered. Pupils and staff respond well to these expectations. Staff work well together for the benefit of all pupils. Many parents commented on the effective support that leaders put in place during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Teachers read to pupils often and pupils love it. As a result, pupils speak confidently about books they like best. They read independently for pleasure. Leaders have made sure there is a well-planned phonics programme in place. Children in Reception quickly learn the sounds that letters make. They blend these sounds well to read words. This strong practice continues into key stage 1, and pupils swiftly learn to read fluently. Any weaker readers receive the right kind of support to help them catch up. Teachers teach comprehension skills well. Older pupils know how to read for deeper meaning and how authors use language.

Leaders and governors are determined that pupils who are 'born curious, stay curious'. Many subjects, such as mathematics, art and physical education (PE) are well planned and sequenced over a two-year cycle. Leaders in early years have outlined what they

expect children in Reception and Nursery to learn. Governors check regularly on the development of the curriculum. They ask the right questions to make sure that all pupils learn well.

Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They deliver lessons clearly. Teachers use assessment well. In subjects like mathematics and art, they make sure that pupils have regular opportunities to practise learning, before moving pupils on. For example, in mathematics, teachers ensure that pupils' understanding of place value is secure, in a wide range of contexts, before teaching formal calculation methods.

Leaders help staff understand the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and how best to support them. Teachers are quick to notice when pupils need a different approach. Leaders review strategies and resources regularly to make sure they are effective. In most subjects, pupils, including pupils with SEND, learn well.

However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders are not quite as far ahead with curriculum planning as they want to be. In history, for example, leaders are still working on sequencing the key knowledge and concepts they want pupils to learn. This means that lessons do not build precisely on prior learning. As a result, pupils sometimes muddle up what they remember.

Leaders plan carefully for pupils' wider development. Pupils learn to respect and care about others. During the inspection, they were collecting donations for the REDI Food, Reading's Food Bank. Pupils know right from wrong. They understand the behaviour policy and think it is fair. The policy works. Pupils are hardworking and try their best in lessons. Staff give the right support to vulnerable pupils who need it. They strive to understand the reasons for different behaviours pupils may show.

Leaders want pupils to be able to collaborate and problem-solve. Teachers plan lessons that promote these values well. For example, children in Reception were creating models of London Bridge. They carefully selected their own tools and materials, making decisions confidently. They worked together well to test out ideas.

Staff too are happy at Springfield. They are very complimentary about leaders' support in managing their workload. They say that the headteacher would never ask them to do something she would not do herself. As one staff member commented, 'COVID separated us into bubbles, but we did not lose our team spirit.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are quick to pick up on any worries that pupils may have. Leaders refer any concerns on when needed. Governors support leaders well in this work by checking safeguarding processes regularly.

Recent training on sexual harassment has ensured that staff are acutely aware of any behaviours that may fall under this term. They know what to do if they have a concern. Pupils understand about being safe online and healthy friendships. They spoke about how important it is to make sure that an online friend is a real-life friend.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The progression of knowledge and skills in a few subjects is not well planned. The precise knowledge that leaders want teachers to teach is not always clear. This hinders teachers' ability to plan learning that builds on what pupils already know. Sometimes, key concepts are missing from the planning. This means pupils do not always learn about all that they should. Leaders should continue with their plans to ensure that pupils' learning, from early years to Year 6, is coherently sequenced, with key knowledge identified, in all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 24 and 25 November 2011.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	109866
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	10200417
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	326
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Zoe Willows
Headteacher	Sarah East
Website	www.springfieldprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	29 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- They met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and a range of staff and pupils.
- The inspector did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. This involved speaking to subject leaders, staff and pupils, visiting lessons and looking at pupils' work. There were also meetings with leaders for PE, art and relationships, health and sex education.
- The inspector met with eight governors, including the chair of governors, and held a telephone call with a representative from the local authority.

- The school's safeguarding arrangements were reviewed. This included safer recruitment checks and record-keeping of serious concerns, as well as speaking to pupils and staff.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school was observed.
- The inspector took into account 73 responses from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 51 free-text comments. In addition, 29 responses to Ofsted's staff survey were considered. There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupils' survey, so the inspector considered their views by speaking to additional groups of pupils.

Inspection team

Lea Hannam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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