

Inspection of a good school: Springbank Primary Academy

Springbank Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL51 0PH

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 November 2021

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to Springbank Academy. They work hard in lessons and want to do their very best. Staff encourage pupils to be resilient in reaching their goals. Pupils like that teachers recognise positive behaviour. They say teachers quickly deal with any silliness in class. Staff tackle any bullying effectively and pupils do not think it is a problem. Children in the Nursery, including those who are two-years-old, benefit from warm relationships and good routines.

Pupils do not learn equally well across the curriculum. Leaders' expectations are not high enough in some subjects, such as modern foreign languages, history and geography. In the early years, teachers are not developing children's language well enough.

Parents like the school. They find the 'wraparound' care of breakfast and after-school club particularly helpful.

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

Leaders have developed curriculum plans for almost all subjects. However, the plans are unwieldy. They do not set out clearly enough what pupils must know. Consequently, teachers are not building pupils' knowledge well enough. In history, for example, teachers do not identify the important knowledge that pupils need to know. In most subjects, learning is not ambitious enough. As a result, pupils remember disconnected facts, which hinders their development of knowledge. Furthermore, pupils in key stage 2 have not yet begun to learn a modern foreign language.

In contrast, the plans for the teaching of mathematics are well organised. Teachers have good subject knowledge and check that pupils understand new learning. Pupils' work shows how their mathematical knowledge is developing well. Teachers have high

expectations for pupils, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils in Year 1 have caught up with their phonic knowledge after disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Children in the early years can put sounds together to read simple words. Reading books match the sounds that children know. This allows them to practise their knowledge and grow in confidence. However, in key stage 2, the reading curriculum is not implemented effectively. Leaders have not explained the curriculum expectations to teachers well enough. This leads to pupils not developing their knowledge well enough.

Children in the early years benefit from the school's reading and mathematics curriculum. Teachers know that many children have joined the school with lower levels of social, physical and language development than is usually the case. However, plans to help these children to catch up are not effective. The activities that teachers provide are not helping children to achieve as well as they could. For example, in the Reception classes there is a great deal for children to play with, but many do so with little purpose. Activities are not well planned and do not hold children's interest or deepen their learning.

Leaders have put a strong programme of pastoral support in place. Parents and pupils say that the pastoral support team is there to help everyone. Pupils see the team room as a safe space to discuss any worries they may have. Leaders plan activities to broaden pupils' understanding of diversity. For example, a male cheerleader and Caribbean dancers have visited this term. Pupils learn about democracy and respect. Clubs are starting up again and pupils relish the opportunities for competitive sport.

Staff feel well supported by leaders and by the Gloucestershire Learning Alliance. The trust has provided staff with development opportunities. Staff value the times that they get together with colleagues in other trust schools to discuss learning.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that the early years provision, the wider curriculum and reading may usefully serve as focuses for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have had appropriate training. They alert leaders promptly if they have any concerns that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Leaders maintain precise records of actions they take. They engage with other agencies to enable families to get the help they need.

Leaders have raised pupils' awareness of online safety. They have used experts to give pupils guidance on the risks of social media.

Checks are made to ensure all adults working with pupils are safe to do so. Leaders have effective support from the trust with aspects of safeguarding.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum plans for some subjects lack clarity about what pupils should know. These plans do not deepen pupils' knowledge well enough. Leaders need to define the essential knowledge pupils need to know, so that teachers understand precisely what to teach.
- The curriculum for the early years is not well planned. Plans are not sufficiently focused enough on what children need to know. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans meet the needs of all children and that they enable them to achieve well across the curriculum.
- The reading curriculum in key stage 2 does not enable pupils to develop their knowledge well enough. This means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that the implementation of the reading curriculum is effective so that pupils become confident readers.

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/outstanding. 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 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 in June 2012.

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	137194
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10200050
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	452
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stuart Allen
Headteacher	Liz White
Website	www.springbankpri-ac.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Gloucestershire Learning Alliance multi-academy trust.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has extended its provision to cater for children from two-years-old.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

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.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team. She met with subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector met with two trustees from the academy board and the director of academies. She also met with the behaviour and inclusion lead from the trust.
- The inspector did deep dives in these subjects: history, reading and mathematics. For each deep dive inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited

lessons and spoke to teachers and pupils. She observed teachers reading with pupils in Year 1.

- The inspector also looked at documentation and pupils' work in other subjects.
- The inspector reviewed the safeguarding arrangements of the school. She looked at records and spoke to leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The inspector visited breakfast club and after-school club. She spoke to pupils at lunchtime.
- The inspector spoke to parents bringing children to breakfast club. She took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and considered the views of staff and pupils in the online surveys.

Inspection team

Wendy Marriott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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