

Inspection of Springfield Academy

Salters Lane South, Darlington, County Durham DL1 2AN

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Springfield Academy is a warm, welcoming school. Leaders have created a calm, but stimulating, environment for learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They listen carefully to the adults who work with them. Leaders expect the very best of every pupil. Pupils are particularly proud when their achievements are publicly celebrated in weekly 'SHINE' assemblies. They love choosing a prize, such as a new book, from 'the table of gold'.

Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They welcome visitors. Good manners are the norm. Pupils, and children in the early years, consistently say 'please' and 'thank you'. Older pupils are excellent role models for younger pupils. Year 6 pupils enjoy helping others at lunchtime. All pupils say they feel safe.

Pupils listen to one another well. They are adept at seeking their own solutions to disagreements they may have. Staff act swiftly to resolve issues on the rare occasions that pupils do fall out. Friendships and relationships are rebuilt swiftly. Bullying is rare.

Pupils and families are at the centre of the school's work. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They praise the support that they receive from staff. One parent reflected the views of many when they said, 'All staff reach out to families; everyone has helped my child grow into a fantastic young child.'

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

Leaders have thought carefully about the order in which the content of the curriculum is taught. Lessons are well sequenced. Pupils build up their knowledge from one lesson to the next. Teachers deliver the planned curriculum well. They successfully adapt the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers encourage pupils to use precise subject-specific vocabulary in lessons. While the curriculum is well structured in some subjects, such as art and science, curriculum plans do not clearly state exactly when disciplinary knowledge, such as working scientifically, should be taught by teachers.

All adults check regularly what pupils have learned. Pupils talk confidently about what they have learned in mathematics and English from previous years. This is because teachers frequently go back over what pupils have learned in the past. In the foundation subjects, such as history, teachers check recent knowledge. However, they do not consistently revisit what pupils have learned in previous topics. This means that pupils forget some important knowledge over time.

Leaders give the teaching of reading a high priority. Early reading is taught well across Reception and key stage 1. There is plenty of extra help for pupils who need it. Most pupils learn to read fluently by the end of key stage 1. Pupils read books that are well matched to the sounds that they know. Teachers read to pupils every

day. Pupils enjoy this. Leaders have selected a wide range of books for pupils to study and read together.

Leaders have created a harmonious environment in school. Pupils know that any adult in school will help them if they have worries. Pupils work and play together well. Pupils show respectful and tolerant attitudes. They see everyone as equal. When talking to the inspectors, one pupil said, 'We're all just people after all.'

Leaders are conscious that COVID-19 has had a negative impact on pupils' well-being. They have rightly prioritised developing pupils' understanding of how to look after their own mental health and well-being. There are additional opportunities to support those pupils who need more help. For example, some pupils are invited to the 'chillaxing' club to support their emotional well-being.

Children in the early years make a very good start to their learning. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum prepares them for key stage 1 well. Children learn to read fluently. They learn key number facts. They listen attentively to their teachers and each other. Communication and relationships with families are strong.

There is strong leadership in school. Leaders aim to provide the very best education for all pupils. Leaders ensure that the school is a place where everyone is valued. Staff are united behind leaders and are proud to work at the school. Governors and trust leaders hold senior leaders to account thoroughly. All staff receive effective training and support. Staff speak highly about the support that they receive to manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All necessary recruitment checks are carried out when staff are appointed.

Leaders provide effective support to pupils who need it. Staff have a thorough understanding of the role they play in keeping pupils safe. Adults know pupils well and are quick to identify and report any signs that may suggest a pupil is at risk of harm. Leaders work effectively with families who need extra help, including working with relevant agencies closely.

Leaders ensure that pupils are given appropriate information about how to manage risks, such as those risks associated with social media. Pupils know how to report concerns when working and playing online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, such as art and science, the curriculum does not clearly set out when disciplinary knowledge should be taught. This means that teachers do not know when and how best to teach disciplinary knowledge in the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans clearly set out what disciplinary knowledge should be taught and when.
- In some foundation subjects, there is not a systematic approach to revisiting important knowledge that pupils have learned previously in the curriculum. This means that pupils forget some important knowledge over time. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum supports pupils to remember important knowledge in all subjects over time.

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	138088
Local authority	Darlington
Inspection number	10227330
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Helen Radcliffe
Principal	Richard Gartland
Website	www.educationvillage.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Springfield Academy is an average-sized primary school. It is part of the Education Village Academy Trust.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, subject leaders and the chief executive officer of the trust. The lead inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the education standards committee.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of

lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors also met with other subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans and looked at pupils' work.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the two deputy designated safeguarding leads and reviewed safeguarding logs. An inspector reviewed the school's single central record.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, throughout the inspection, including pupils who had been supported by the school to improve their behaviour. Inspectors also observed breakfast club, breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- An inspector met with the school's special educational needs coordinator and checked the quality of support plans for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors considered the views of 25 pupils and 23 staff who responded to Ofsted's surveys. Inspectors also considered the responses from 54 parents to Ofsted's parent survey, Ofsted Parent View. An inspector also spoke with parents at the end of the school day.

Inspection team

Melanie Maitland, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Graham Findlay

Her Majesty's Inspector

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