

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Springfield School

The Bronze Barrow, Cedar Drive, Madley Park, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1AR

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 October 2024

Outcome

Springfield School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

A vibrant community ethos makes this school a positive and nurturing place to learn. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Staff know pupils very well. There are warm, caring relationships. Pupils know they are valued and that their opinions matter in this inclusive school. Consistent and high expectations for behaviour help pupils to feel safe. The environment is calm. Staff provide high-quality support and care.

Pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans sit at the heart of each pupil's school journey. The curriculum is carefully tailored to pupils' individual needs. Pupils access learning in ways that meet their sensory and physical needs well.

The school is ambitious for pupils. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' communication skills. Pupils experience a broad curriculum enhanced by a variety of enrichment activities. They enjoy their learning, which is designed to stimulate their interests, develop their independence and prepare them for life outside of school.

Pupils access a vast range of visits and trips. This supports them to learn about the wider world and to build their confidence. For example, some pupils enjoyed a residential trip, where they climbed a mountain. These opportunities enhance pupils' learning and make their time at school memorable.

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

All pupils have an EHC plan. With guidance from external specialists when required, the school identifies the additional needs of pupils accurately.

The school's curriculum, including in the early years, is broad and ambitious. Pupils study a range of national curriculum subjects. Pupils can also achieve in other areas, for example in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Most pupils achieve relevant qualifications and are ready for the next stage in their education, employment or training when they leave Springfield School.

In the main, staff check pupils' learning in lessons effectively. When required, accurate assessment information is used well to craft future learning for pupils. Staff prepare strenuously detailed termly reports that form a basis for the information the school provides parents and carers about their child's progress.

Communication has a very high priority across the school. Leaders have established an unrelenting focus on ensuring that pupils' opinions are heard. For example, pupils are supported to use pictures, symbols and signing. This helps them to improve their interaction and engagement with staff, each other and with the world around them. Consequently, pupils share what they need and how they feel, knowing that caring and attentive staff will respond quickly.

Reading is an integral part of school life. The joy of stories permeates topics of learning. Pupils of all ages, including children in the early years, relish listening to stories and joining in with songs and rhymes. Staff use signing and objects to help pupils to understand and enjoy books. Children in the early years and those with profound and multiple learning needs particularly enjoy and benefit from sensory stories.

Pupils understand the school routines. They know what to expect in class and this helps them grow in confidence. Learning is rarely disrupted. Pupils who find managing their behaviour difficult receive suitable support. They learn to self-regulate and gain independence. As a result, there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around school. The school has a thorough approach to monitoring absence rates and implementing strategies to reduce them. Most pupils attend school regularly.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development is excellent. It provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their resilience, personality and sense of self-worth. Staff teach pupils about how to keep safe and be independent, for example using symbols and signs to share their feelings. There are many outdoor and cultural visits and activities that pupils remember and talk about enthusiastically. These include trips to the local cinema, forest skills sessions and other outdoor and adventurous activities.

The school offers many experiences to pupils to prepare them for adult life. For example, pupils take charge of, and run, a tuck shop. They can fulfil a multitude of roles, including serving, pricing and catering. Guests from the adjoining mainstream schools are often welcomed. Furthermore, all pupils have opportunities to carry out work experience. This helps them to learn about life in the workplace.

Governance through the trust is committed to ensuring that pupils have their needs met effectively. Trust leaders use their expertise to provide appropriate support and challenge to the school. The majority of staff enjoy working at Springfield School. Most appreciate

that leaders are mindful of their workload, though efforts to reduce it are yet to take effect.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff workload due to assessment and reporting has grown, as the school has made changes to the quality of education pupils receive. Some staff do not feel that they have been as well supported as they could have been during this process. The school should ensure that it fully considers the views of staff, and the impact on workload, when making changes to policy and procedure.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Springfield School, to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2014.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 147127 |
| Local authority | Oxfordshire |
| Inspection number | 10341872 |
| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Academy special converter |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 117 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Chris Scrivener |
| CEO of the trust | Kay Willett |
| Headteacher | Kate Campbell |
| Website | www.springfield.oxon.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- Springfield School is a special school for pupils with autism; multi-sensory impairments; speech, language and communication difficulties; social, emotional and mental health difficulties; physical disabilities; and profound and multiple learning difficulties. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- This was the school's first inspection since joining The Gallery Trust in June 2020.
- The school does not use any alternative education providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior school leaders, subject leaders, members of the trust and local advisory board, including the chair of the local advisory board.
- Inspectors discussed the curriculum and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including policies and analyses of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke to some pupils and staff about the school. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lunchtime and breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff. There were no responses to the pupil survey to consider.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers expressed through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. An inspector also spoke with some parents.

Inspection team

Gary Tostevin, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jason Philipsz

Ofsted Inspector

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