



Springfield House Community Special School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103623
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 276959
Inspection dates 10 May 2006 to 11 May 2006
Reporting inspector Sarah Mascall AI

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Kenilworth Road
School category	Community		Knowle
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		Solihull, West Midlands B93 0AJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01564 775696
Number on roll	57	Fax number	01564 771767
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Graham Locker
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr Stuart Revell

Age group 5 to 11	Inspection dates 10 May 2006 - 11 May 2006	Inspection number 276959
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Springfield House is a residential primary school for boys and girls with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Of the 57 pupils only a small number (11) are girls. Many pupils have a range of additional learning difficulties including autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and Aspergers. All have statements of special educational need. At present 13 pupils are residential and the remaining boys and girls are day pupils. Eight pupils are looked after by the local authority. Pupils come from Birmingham and outlying towns. The majority of pupils are White British and there are no pupils with English as an additional language.

There have been a number of changes to the leadership of the school in the last three years and an acting management team is in place until September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Springfield House School is a good school and through its own self-evaluation it recognises this. It is successful in achieving its aim to enable pupils to live and learn together and show respect to each other.

Pupils start school with very limited skills both academically and in their personal development. By the time they leave, pupils have made good progress in their learning and in the way they behave and respond to others. Progress in their communication and reading skills is good but progress in writing is not as good. Pupils make good progress in mathematics and in personal, social and health education. Teaching and learning are good and staff manage pupils' behaviour very effectively. Pupils are supported well by the good care and welfare procedures. However, the school does not make the most of its success in improving pupils' behaviour as it does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to experience and return to mainstream education.

Leadership and management are good. Senior staff have ensured that the school has continued to improve and develop. There is a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and a good start has been made on collecting information about pupils' achievements. The school recognises, though, that it is not yet using this data sufficiently well to evaluate what it needs to do to improve standards further. Parents are very positive about the school and the impact it has had on their children. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has good capacity to improve further. It provides good value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision

Grade: 2

The residential facility is good and this is confirmed by a recent positive Commission for Social Care Inspections (CSCI) report. The small number of recommendations for improvement raised in the CSCI report have been or are in the process of being addressed. The accommodation is comfortable and homely and pupils are clearly proud of their surroundings. There are good systems in place to support pupils' personal development and relationships with staff are very positive. Pupils say they like being in residence and enjoy all the activities that are available to them. Staff make good use of the local community and plan various evening activities for each group. The use of residential social workers (RSWs) during the school day to support pupils means that links between school and residential staff are good. For example, the handover of pupils to teachers at the start of each day ensures teachers are made aware of any concerns that may have arisen overnight. Effective links have been established between the head of care and the co-ordinator of personal, social and health education. Together they have developed a new programme dealing with issues such as bullying and social skills, which will be taught in the residential facility as well as in school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide better opportunities for pupils to experience or return full time to mainstream schools.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities for extended writing to develop their skills in writing.
- Make better use of information gathered on pupils' progress to inform the next steps in planning what the school wants to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From a very low start, pupils, regardless of their learning difficulties, make good progress although standards remain below the national average. The very small number of girls in the school make good progress because teachers ensure that they are involved in lessons. All pupils achieve well in speaking and listening because they have many opportunities to contribute to discussions both in lessons and during the school day and their responses are valued. Most pupils make good progress in reading and for some, particularly the youngest pupils, progress is excellent. The school has recognised that pupils' progress in writing is not satisfactory because there are not sufficient opportunities to enable pupils to write at length or in detail, for example when responding to written questions. Achievement in mathematics is good throughout the school. Pupils make good progress in personal, social and health education because teachers place great importance on this area. The school sets itself challenging targets and meets these well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their good attendance. They settle to work in lessons quickly and have positive attitudes to learning. They demonstrate considerable pride in their work and this is shown in the way they celebrate their own and each other's achievements in assemblies.

Pupils gradually develop positive feelings about themselves and this is a direct result of the strong sense of mutual respect within the school. This is endorsed by parents, one of whom commented that their child's 'self-esteem has greatly improved and this is because of the care and understanding given by all the staff'. Together with their good progress in literacy and numeracy, this prepares pupils well for their future economic well-being. However, the lack of opportunities for pupils to attend mainstream schools prevents them from making full use of the skills they have learnt.

Pupils show a good understanding of what is acceptable and not acceptable behaviour and learn not to react when others behave inappropriately. They respond well to the school's high expectations and the positive relations they have with all staff. The school has addressed pupils' concerns about bullying well through improving lunchtime activities and this has been effective in reducing the number of incidents that occur. Pupils have a good awareness of what is good for them in terms of healthy lifestyles

and, although commenting that they should have chips more than once a week, they do appreciate the range of good quality food they have each day. They have a good understanding of keeping safe. Pupils take full advantage of the many physical activities on offer including swimming, football and horse riding. This is extended further in several classes, for example with a 'Wakeup Workout' which helps the pupils become calm and settle on arrival in school. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities in the school community and those within the school council take their roles very seriously. Pupils are involved in fund-raising and have a good understanding of life in a multicultural society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good because all staff know pupils well and manage their behaviour very effectively. They make good use of the school's systems to ensure that there is a consistent approach to rewards and sanctions through the school. Considerable time is spent ensuring that pupils understand when they have behaved inappropriately. Staff work closely together and ensure that best use is made of their specialist subject knowledge. Effective training has enabled staff to have a better understanding of the range of needs of their pupils and often lessons are well planned to meet the needs of each pupil. However, subject leaders recognise that this is not yet consistent throughout the school and at times work set is not appropriate for all pupils. Teachers make very good use of information and communication technology in their lessons both to support learning and to create a calming atmosphere which, for example, allows time for pupils to read independently. However, not all teachers plan effectively to improve pupils' writing skills and there is an overuse of printed worksheets which often prevents pupils from writing in detail. Teachers and support staff work well together and there are good examples of joint planning to ensure there is a clear understanding of what pupils will learn. Support staff are particularly effective in helping and encouraging pupils to remain on task. Teachers assess pupils' work on a regular basis. However the school recognises that more work is needed to ensure their assessments are always accurate. In addition, it is not always possible to tell from teachers' marking how much help a pupil has been given to complete their tasks.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall. Effective curriculum planning ensures that pupils are taught all the subjects they should be and makes clear what each year group will learn. There are a good number of opportunities for pupils to be involved in activities and the school makes effective use of the local community to support pupils' learning through trips to places of interest. However, links with mainstream schools are not effective and opportunities to prepare pupils for returning to the mainstream are very limited.

The recently introduced extended curriculum provides a range of activities for pupils to be involved in after school, such as fishing, walking and cycling. There are appropriate plans in place to develop this further. The programme for personal and social development is very good and the school plans to develop it even further by introducing a programme focused on developing pupils' social and emotional aspects of learning. The accommodation and school grounds provide pupils with a very positive learning environment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Staff are strongly committed to all pupils and have been well trained to meet their needs. They establish very good relationships with pupils and this enables pupils to feel safe and confident. Good child protection procedures are in place and there is regular training for all staff. There are very good links with other agencies and pupils are well supported through a range of therapies. Good, regular contact between home and school and the good work with agencies provides support for parents and families as well as the pupils. The use of setting targets to help pupils make progress is satisfactory overall and being developed well. It has improved from the previous inspection. Targets are now more focused on pupils' personal and social development, though this is not yet consistent for all pupils. The school is appropriately looking to reintroduce targets for literacy and numeracy to enable teachers to track pupils' academic progress more effectively. Pupils know their targets well and are involved in both setting them and reviewing their progress in class.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Despite a number of changes in leadership over the last three years, the senior management team have succeeded in ensuring that the school has continued to provide a good quality education for its pupils. Systems to check on the work that goes on in class are good and subject leaders carry out their roles well. There is, as a result, a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and this is reflected in the school's accurate self-evaluation. There is a good level of consultation with all those involved in the school, including parents and pupils, and this has contributed to the school's understanding of how it is perceived and what it needs to do to improve. A good start has been made in collating data on pupils' achievements but the school is still at an early stage of analysing and evaluating the information gained and is not yet using it as part of its improvement planning.

Governors have a good knowledge of what goes on in school and a number have visited lessons and provided detailed reports to the governing body. They recognise they are still at an early stage of developing their role as 'critical friends' of the school but are very clear about what needs to happen, as when setting targets for the acting

headteacher or visiting the residential facility. Good progress has been made since the last inspection and the school has a good capacity to improve.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school. We very much enjoyed meeting and talking to you. You were very pleasant and polite and we were very pleased to see how proud you were of your school and the residential facility.

Your school is a good school. Below are some of the things we liked best:

- You get on well with your teachers and they are very good at helping you to manage your behaviour.
- You improve your behaviour and social skills well.
- You clearly like school and you all attend school very regularly.
- You all make good progress in speaking and listening and in your reading and mathematics.
- You are very well cared for and those who stay in the residential facility are looked after well.

To make things even better we have suggested three things that the school should now do:

- Provide more opportunities for you to return to mainstream schools.
- Provide you with more opportunities to improve your writing skills.
- Use the information it has on your achievements to help plan to make the school even better.

I wish you well for the future.

Sarah Mascall Lead inspector