



# Springfield School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 111507  
**LEA** Cheshire  
**Inspection number** 278709  
**Inspection dates** 3 October 2005 to 4 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Rosemary Eaton CfBT Lead Inspector

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Crewe Green Road
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Crewe
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 19		Cheshire CW1 5HS
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01270 582446
<b>Number on roll</b>	108	<b>Fax number</b>	01270 258281
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr David Griffith
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 February 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr M Swaine

<b>Age group</b> 2 to 19	<b>Inspection dates</b> 3 October 2005 - 4 October 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 278709
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Springfield is a school for pupils who have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Additionally, there are small numbers with moderate learning difficulties, behavioural difficulties, or high dependency needs, and nine pupils have autistic spectrum disorders. All have statements of special educational need. Pupils live mainly in South Cheshire, which incorporates Crewe. Nearly one in four is eligible for free school meals. Six pupils are in foster care. There are extremely few from minority ethnic groups or with English as an additional language.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

Springfield is an outstanding school, providing extremely good value for money. Several of the judgements made by the school prior to the inspection were modest - for instance, its effectiveness was considered to be good. Throughout the school, pupils achieve outstandingly well although, owing to their learning difficulties and disabilities, the levels they attain are significantly below those found in mainstream schools. The school provides outstandingly well for children in the Foundation Stage and, as a result, they achieve extremely well. Improvements to their outdoor play area are planned. All pupils make exceptionally good progress in learning to communicate and in their personal development - for instance, their ability to be as independent as possible. Behaviour is excellent and pupils with challenging behaviour become increasingly able both to follow routines and to cope with change. Pupils' enjoyment of lessons and activities is very evident and they are seldom absent unless ill. The arrangements for preparing pupils for their future lives are exceptionally good, with work-related learning high on the agenda from Year 9 onwards. A particularly strong feature of teaching and the curriculum - both outstanding - is the manner in which the needs of all pupils are fully met, providing them with equal opportunities to learn, achieve and develop. This is a product of the staff's detailed knowledge of the levels at which pupils are working and what they need to learn next. Pupils are cared for extremely well, with a wide variety of agencies enhancing what the school provides. Leadership and management are outstanding, the headteacher providing the vision that other staff share. This results in a school that knows exactly where it is going, constantly seeking to do the very best it can for all pupils. There has been good progress since the previous inspection and the school's capacity to continue to improve is exceptionally good. Governors and all staff groups make it their business to give every pupil every opportunity to achieve their potential and have fun in the process.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 1**

The school's judgement, that the sixth form is good, was influenced by its awareness that there has not been time for students to gain awards in all the accredited courses now followed. However, students' achievement is outstanding, even though the accreditation offered has not, until recently, fully recognised this. The curriculum is particularly effective, catering for all students, whatever their learning difficulties and/or disabilities and equipping them with the knowledge, skills and personal qualities needed in later life. Students are helped to develop self-confidence and self-esteem, through outstanding teaching and care. The sixth form is led and managed extremely well.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Carry out the planned improvements to the outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, in order to provide a more stimulating environment for learning and enjoyment.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Owing to their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, pupils' standards are very much lower than those expected for their age. However, they make outstanding progress, often building rapidly on what they have already learnt. Pupils' achievement is equally impressive, regardless of their learning difficulties and disabilities or personal circumstances. Pupils with the most complex medical conditions are helped to maintain their skills for as long as possible. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a flying start, settling in quickly and making impressive progress. The school sets very challenging targets for individual pupils and for those in each teaching group. These are regularly met or surpassed. Nevertheless, the school judged achievement to be good, rather than outstanding.

Achievement is especially good in the skills of communication, because great emphasis is placed on enabling all pupils to learn and use methods that suit them best. For example, many of those who are unable to speak become fluent in the use of a picture exchange communication system, constructing sentences which enable them to make their needs or opinions known. The success of this aspect of the curriculum has a huge impact on pupils' ability to learn in other subjects and on their personal development.

From Year 9 onwards, all pupils have excellent opportunities to have their achievements recognised through accredited courses. Depending on their learning difficulties and disabilities, sixth form students are successful in courses leading, for instance, to entry level certificates and accredited units of work. Last year, six higher attaining students achieved grades C to F in a GCSE textiles course. All in the sixth form achieve aspects of the Duke of Edinburgh award at Bronze level, three gaining the full award in 2005.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

All aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Great attention is paid to ensuring that they become aware of living in a multicultural society. Regular visits by artists, dancers and musicians from a variety of cultures introduce pupils to Indian dance, canal boat art, and African story telling, for instance. The school works strenuously to enable all pupils to acquire opinions and opportunities to express these. For example, the pupil advocate of another explained how he enjoyed listening to music and how she operates a light display for him - 'He loves it'.

Pupils attend well, coming to school ready and willing to work, but knowing that they will have lots of fun. They become increasingly aware of how to keep safe and healthy - for example, through their choice of snacks. They know exactly what they would do if they had a worry, and all have someone to go to if troubled. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils get on together extremely well and are understanding of others' needs and difficulties. Those who have challenging behaviour become more able to control themselves and cope in situations they find stressful.

There are excellent opportunities for pupils to develop the skills needed to contribute to the community and for life beyond school. Sixth form students take part in enterprise activities, learning about how businesses operate, and experience the world of work through, for instance, supporting in classes for the youngest pupils, placements in hairdressers or cafes, or visits by people who have different jobs.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Judged by the school to be good, the quality of teaching is outstanding. Every pupil is fully included and involved in lessons. For instance, in a Year 11 design and technology lesson, skilful signing enabled a pupil with hearing impairment to follow instructions and learn how to tie-dye. Two others, with autistic spectrum disorders, worked for as long as possible within the class group, but withdrew every now and then to settle themselves, before resuming their tasks. As a result, the lesson ran very smoothly, enabling all pupils to make significant progress. Teachers and teaching assistants share the same very high expectations, making these clear to pupils and then insisting that they are met. For example, they manage pupils' behaviour firmly and consistently, but sensitively.

Whatever the subject, teachers promote pupils' personal development - for instance, by encouraging them to be as independent as possible - and their communication skills. Speech and language therapists work closely with teachers, assessing pupils' needs and establishing the methods that will best meet these. In the nursery and reception years, children are offered a variety of communication systems, such as signing, symbols, and objects of reference, to help them understand the world around them and communicate with others. Staff allow children plenty of time to investigate resources such as a book and its accompanying symbol, praising them enthusiastically for 'good looking' or making a supreme effort to raise their head.

Parents appreciate that staff have a 'deep understanding' of each pupil's needs. This is the product of a network of comprehensive assessment systems, combining day-to-day observations with formal records of the levels at which pupils are working. The information collected is used very effectively by teachers to plan lessons and programmes and by senior staff to adjust the curriculum or provide additional support for pupils or teachers.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

Outstanding features of the curriculum include the way in which each pupil's needs are met as they move up through the school. The curriculum is modified so it matches their learning difficulties and disabilities and they are all taught in classes alongside pupils of the same age. As a result, for example, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties benefit from the stimulation of seeing higher attaining pupils

working and learning. Subjects and courses are relevant to pupils' current and future needs.

There is a host of enrichment opportunities, which make learning enjoyable and extend pupils' experiences. For instance, very popular after-school clubs, regular outings in the local and wider community, and residential visits all enhance the curriculum and pupils' personal development. The Artsmark Gold award is proof of the wealth of artistic endeavours, which are matched by sporting opportunities - older pupils were learning judo during the inspection. Both areas are supported greatly by the school's very strong links with the community and the enterprising ways in which these are used to help pupils achieve and become well rounded individuals.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The outstanding way in which the school cares for all pupils underpins its work. The staff team work together extremely closely in order to give every pupil a safe and secure climate in which to thrive. For instance, the school nurse has recently provided training to raise the awareness of education staff, midday supervisors, and taxi drivers and escorts, in how to cope with epilepsy and asthma. Child protection procedures are robust and supported by strong links with a nominated social worker and the nurse's specialist knowledge. Staff training is comprehensive in all aspects of care - for example, how to manage pupils who have challenging behaviour. Parents are also encouraged to develop their expertise in areas such as communication, so they are more able to help their children to continue to learn when at home.

From the time children enter the school, staff have an eye to the future and begin preparing them for their lives beyond school. The determination to enable all pupils to be as independent as possible is one facet of this; another is the more formal planning for a smooth transition to adult life. The programme of personal, social and health education contributes significantly to each pupil's understanding of how to stay safe, whilst key skills, such as problem solving and numeracy, are an especially strong focus in the sixth form, along with specific work-related learning. The Connexions adviser plays a significant role in this aspect of students' care, working extremely closely with school and college staff and fully involving students and their parents.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher's outstanding leadership provides a very clear direction and results in a school that is constantly questioning and challenging itself to do even more towards meeting its aim to 'exceed expectation and achieve excellence'. The senior team and all staff groups share this vision, have very high expectations, and are determined to provide as well as they can for each pupil. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and the school is extremely well placed to continue to develop. There are extensive and systematic methods of collecting

information regarding the performance of each aspect of the school. These include the views of parents and pupils and provide a wealth of evidence, leading to accurate evaluations of, for example, the strengths and weaknesses of teaching. However, in a few cases, the judgements provided prior to the inspection erred on the side of caution.

The school is extremely outward looking, seeking advice, support, and validation from a wide range of agencies. It is involved in a variety of local and national initiatives, manifested, for example, in the range of opportunities for pupils to have experiences in mainstream schools and colleges, and in the community. Students and professionals from all settings are welcomed to share the school's daily life and special events, and benefit from its expertise.

Funds are used very efficiently to improve what is provided for pupils. Most recently a pupil support centre has been built, offering more flexible accommodation to meet pupils' individual needs. The school recognises the need to improve the outdoor play area for its youngest pupils, in order to offer a more stimulating environment for learning. Governors bring an array of skills and experience. They are supportive and challenging and are currently developing their links with particular subjects, in order to be in an even stronger position to find out at first hand about the school's performance.



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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	1
The behaviour of learners	1	1
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school. We enjoyed our short time with you very much. We know that some of you find reading difficult, so your teachers will tell you what this letter says.

What we liked most about your school:

- You all work really hard, learn a lot, look after each other, and have plenty of fun.
- Mr Swaine and everyone who works at Springfield do their very best to make sure you are all safe and happy in school.
- The oldest pupils all pass examinations. They practise doing jobs so they are ready to go to college or work when they leave.
- Your mums and dads think Springfield is a brilliant school, and so do we.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Make the youngest children's playground more exciting.